Packaging the Past with Fossil

Dyson’s Cyclone Force Sweeps Vacuum Cleaner Market

International’s Identity for the Open Road
One for the Road
When International sought to revitalize its identity, it was looking for a vehicle that allowed it to speak with one voice.

Dyson Fills A Vacuum
Innovations in vacuum cleaners remained stagnant for decades until a British designer saw it as a whole new way.

Quiz: Brand Frag
This quiz revists brand strategist Jay Doblin's "frag" experiment by cropping in tight on some popular logos.

Sign Language
When communicating with designers and printers, sometimes the clearest means is through sign language.

Business and Design Classic
A toy that could be built into other toys, the Lego brick has held children's interest over the generations.

Interview with
John Seely Brown
Technology scientist John Seely Brown talks about the social life of information and communities in the digital age.

24

16

14

22

6

Authentic Fossil
Fossil has made retro-design cool and contemporary, and its packaging as desirable as the product inside.
Xerox's John Seely Brown on Design

For more than a decade, John Seely Brown headed up the famed Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), which produced a phenomenal volume of computer hardware and software innovations. Most recently Dr. Brown has been chief scientist at Xerox Corporation. Here he is interviewed by Peter Lawrence, chairman of Corporate Design Foundation.

Your background is math, physics and computer science, yet you list design as a personal interest in your bio. How do you define design?

Probably not the way that most graphic and industrial designers do. When they talk about design innovation, they're usually talking about a product. For me, the concept of design is more than object-oriented; it encompasses the design of processes, systems and institutions as well. Increasingly, we need to think about designing the types of institutions we need to get things done in this rapidly accelerating world.

Designers seem to be better at creating user-friendly cars than a user-friendly cyberworld. What seems to be the problem?

Right now we enter the cyberworld disembodied from the physical environment. We need to consider the interplay between virtual and physical systems. By comparison, look at today's cars, which use a massive amount of embedded computing. When you go to a high-performance car, you don't think about asking what operating system it's running—Linux or Windows?

Yet the amount of computing power and networking going on inside is amazing. All that computational power is seamlessly coming to your aid when you need it. Its purpose is to keep you better connected to the physical world. ABS brakes and OnStar are two obvious examples.

What makes navigating the Internet so complex and disorienting?

Think of a web page or browser. No matter how well you design it, you jump, jump, jump. After about the seventh jump, you don't even know where you are. Everything is jump from this center of attention to that center of attention. Compare that to architecture. What do good architects do? How do they use the landscaping around a building to help direct visitors toward the main entrance? As you approach the building, you are provided with all kinds of subliminal cues that guide and orient you to where you need to go. Computer scientists would simply tell you where the main entrance is by posting a big sign saying "Main Entrance." They would give you explicit signals that you must consciously interpret.
We thought that was a great idea until we grew up. We’ve learned that paper offers many advantages over computers. A piece of paper never runs out of power. You never have to reboot a piece of paper. A piece of paper never turns blue and says, “Sorry: unrecoverable error.” Plus paper has infinitely better resolution than the world’s best displays today.

Do you see new media replacing old? Will online documents replace hard-copy ones?

Creative use of new documents no longer involves direct challenges to old ones. These new forms appear to reinvigorate the old, extending their useful life. For example, online library catalogues providing abstracts, indexing and, in some cases, full texts for print journals, have reinforced these print journals rather than undermined them. Journals remain the best social filter for the flood of writing available on any topic and the best repositories of the development of ideas and attitudes. As yet, digital media do not compete in these realms. But electronic resources have made using print journals much easier.

The plethora of documents now online seems to make it harder to find what you really want.

Yes, the central issue here is for audiences to be able to recognize documents intended for them. Book designers faced that problem long ago. Realizing that books were not of universal interest but addressed to specific audiences, they developed strategies to help readers distinguish different kinds of books. As a result, books use far more than their titles to engage certain audiences, while telling others to pass by. We do, indeed, judge a book by its cover and from other visual cues. On the Internet, it is still hard to make even a reasonable guess at the intended audience. This difficulty may reflect an implicit assumption by many that documents have universal appeal or that content alone will marshal an audience. Yet if the overall form appears unclear, few will linger over the content, especially given the ease with which links allow people to pass by.
Fossil’s multiple logos, ever-changing packaging, and continually reinvented publications appear at first to have nothing more in common than a certain visual historicity—the Retro look. “The fact is that we have a very consistent brand identity, built around the ideals the company was founded on in 1984,” says Tim Hale, who has been Fossil’s creative director since the beginning. “But graphically, it comes out of a shared sensibility among our customers, staff, and management, and not out of a standards manual.” This is a living brand, rather than a legislated one. And design is the differentiating factor.

It’s been a powerful differentiator. Starting with one line of Retro-style watches sold through department stores, Fossil now sells sunglasses, leather goods, and apparel in 2,000 partner stores and 82 of their own outlets—and that’s just the domestic market. Fossil products (and its lifestyle brand) are distributed in 80 countries, bringing in upwards of $500 million in net annual sales.

The brand’s success has translated to a second business. Disney, Cole-Haan, Armani, DKNY, and Paul Frank have all contracted Fossil to design, produce, and brand their own licensed products. Belief in design as the maker of brands has paid off.

When Fossil was launched in the ’80s, most businesses based their brands on product-oriented, features-and-benefits positions. Fossil’s decision to base their brand on design was a gamble—but one that was informed by market realities.

Founders Tom and Kosta Karotis observed Swatch’s success in the early ’80s, and saw an opportunity for other affordable, design-driven brands. By 1985, they had three lines of watches on the market, based on different design themes. Only one succeeded: the ’50s-style watches loved by their father, “the Fossil” (hence the company name). Once the market chose the Retro line, they brought Tim Hale on board to develop the brand.

Hale’s mandate was to first find out why consumers liked Retro, and then to exemplify those values in design. “Our market is 18- to 25-year-olds. They don’t have personal memories of the mid-century, and don’t necessarily know where this style comes from, but they like it,” he says. “To them, it looks ‘classic.’” It’s much the same overseas, where the brand translates as authentic Americana. Inside Fossil, Retro style stands for the company’s traditional values: honesty, bringing a good product to market for a good price, having
integrity in its dealings with people, and standing behind the product. "We try to be as authentic in the way we operate as in our design," Hale says.

The appeal of Fossil's style seems to be rooted in its innocence, which the designers emphasize. "We focus on the positives of the postwar era: the return to industry, the technological innovation, the fascination with big cars, the optimism," says Hale. "And we love the effects they created with saturated color and illustration."

As an infant brand, Fossil's challenge was to create identity at the point of purchase without advertising support. Unique packaging was the solution. The packages had to work as display props, brand identifiers, and value-added items in their own right. "We wanted to give the merchandiser something to merchandise with, and the customer something to love," says Hale.

They started going to flea markets in search of '50s ephemera. They bought packages, tins, jars, antique cameras, telephones, radios, knick-knacks, and then immersed themselves in the artifacts of the era. Initially, they used the collection as props to create an authentic setting for the watches in their merchandising materials. "Then we realized we had to create that same kind of collectibility with our own packaging," says Hale, "which is where the idea of the tins came from." Tin packages last for years, can be printed with almost any kind of design — and people love them.

From the beginning, Hale and the Kartosis brothers wanted the visual identity to be random. Hale explains that "you can't hold people's interest in displays unless you update them regularly, and customers won't keep a package if they already have one just like it. On top of that, our market continually refreshes itself as customers age out of the demographic, so we need to refresh our look." They deliberately designed packages with the Fossil name appearing in all kinds of fonts and settings, using themes and graphics that vary from year to year. Still, they manage to convey a consistent image. As Hale says, "We know what is and isn't Fossil."

Being a high-fashion brand, they have to provide new products continually. Fossil goes to market five times a year, and since 25% of the line expires in each cycle, the entire product line is refreshed annually. So is the packaging. "We produce close to 3 million tins per year, using 100-plus different designs," says Hale. That's a lot of new design — and it's all done in-house.

Fossil's 100-plus design staff could easily pass for a full-service consultancy. They have watch designers, graphic designers, eyewear designers, packaging designers, photographers, model makers, and manufacturing designers. "We could go outside and find phenomenal talent, but that would be a double-edged sword," Hale says. "Since they don't live the brand every day, they don't always get it. We'd rather put the energy into managing and developing our own talent."

On top of that, consultants' fees would cut into our margins. Owning both the brand and the infrastructure has been very healthy for us."

It also helps Fossil maintain a consistent identity as the brand evolves. "Fossil is a moving target," Hale says. "With our own staff, we can keep the designers on the same page as we take new directions. Though we stay in the same genre, we use a different set of themes every year," says Hale. "To keep it fresh, we've promoted the idea among the designers of constantly reinterpreting the theme, adding to the language of the brand. This allows us to bring in young designers with new ideas, teach them the core elements of the brand, and trust them to express it visually."

Each packaging series has a theme — resort hotels, motor oil, or laundry soap — carried over two to four tins. For products sold in Fossil stores, the designers also develop themes around the individual locations, to make a connection between the store and the products it sells. For each cycle, the designers make trend boards — themed collections of vintage packaging — to present at brainstorming sessions. "We'll come out of each session with a half dozen themes. Then the designers go off,
Fossil designers originally collected tins and '50s ephemera at flea markets to use for propping Fossil merchandise in department stores. The nostalgic appeal of these objects led to creating packages that have become collectible in themselves.

**Popular Science Tins**
The artwork and text on these watch tins were inspired by the classified ads in old Popular Science magazines.

**Easel-Back Calendar**
The stand-up calendar is an idea borrowed from the popular bank and service station giveaways of the '50s and '60s.

**Daily Desktop Journal**
Also packaged in a tin, this desktop journal features a graphic theme of old matchbook cover artwork.

**Car Tins**
A fascination with tin toys led to the creation of this wristwatch packaging series in 1991. The car is the lid of the case.

**Motor Oil Graphics**
Fossil adapted the look and the shape of motor oil cans to package watches. The cans proved ideal from a merchandising perspective since they stacked easily and drew a lot of point-of-sale interest.

**Collectors Club Promo**
Each year Fossil produces a special kit offered exclusively to Collectors Club members ($75 annual dues). This lunchbox-style kit contains a membership card, watch and other items.

**EyeGlass Cases**
Fossil’s eyeglass case is based on the oval tins used to hold welder’s goggles in the '20s.

**Jewelry Cases**
Sold primarily in Europe, Fossil sterling silver and stainless steel jewelry is packaged in oval-shaped tins featuring manipulated illustrations of '50s “glamour girls.”
develop original concepts based on the source material, and bring them back for the next session, where we might begin to work out the colors.”

One problem with relying on historical sources is that the design can become an homage to the past, rather than a contemporary communication. To stay current, Hale and his team have created a hybrid. They collect and study matchbook art, album covers, needle packages for radiographs, old cans for pharmaceuticals, cologne, and cosmetics, select graphic ideas that suit Fossil’s witty, unpretentious personality, and recombine them. “We interpret the source material and put a spin on it,” says Hale, “but we always strive for authenticity. The typography, for instance, is either hand-drawn, set in old lead and wood type, or printed with silkscreen or rubber plates, then scanned. We always pay close attention to the effects age has on surfaces and color—pure colors don’t translate as Retro. They have to be distressed, given texture, and look as though they’ve dulled or yellowed with age.”

Over time, though still working from mid-century sources, Fossil has developed a visual language of its own. Bouncy, customized fonts and simple, cheeky illustrations are arranged in energetic compositions with a distinct palette of ochres, olives, soft blues and strong reds. The designs are simpler and bolder than their mid-century models, more carefully focused, but never lose the spirit of the age.

What’s interesting, given all this attention to authenticity, is that most of Fossil’s products don’t look Retro. While the packaging story is about classic Americana, the product story is driven by fashion trends in the Modernist tradition: good materials, good craftsmanship, simple lines, and considered detail. Hale says, “People have a sentimental attachment to the humor and authenticity of the brand, but on a day-to-day basis, they want stylish accessories.”

The tins are virtually a separate product line. “We have a running joke,” says Hale, “that you can either buy a watch and pick out a tin, or buy a tin and pick out a watch. Either way, it costs about $65 bucks.”

Behind the wit lies an interesting marketing strategy. “Letting customers choose their own tin adds to the shopping experience. If the item is a gift, they can customize the package for the person they are giving it to.”

Since the brand, rather than product features, drives Fossil’s success, it seemed logical to extend the line. Fossil is gambling their success on two factors: the nature of their brand, and the experience of their management. “We started as a watch company, but what people came to love is the character our visual identity represents,” Hale explains. It’s a lifestyle brand, and as such isn’t married to any one product.

Retail experience matters when it comes to knowing what products to add and when to add them. “Our senior management comes from department store backgrounds, and know where the holes are,” Hale says. “They saw a vacancy in watches, then in leather, then in sunscreen; those vacancies represented opportunities for the right vendor, with the right product, at the right price.”

Fossil has managed to translate their Retro image across media as well as across product lines. Whether print, interactive, or architectural, the underlying visual language and personality are constant. The headquarters building is done in Chicago brick, with stained concrete floors, and warm interior colors. The annual reports use light-hearted historical imagery, lively headlines, rich textures, and the same warm colors. The website follows suit. But the packaging carries the brand to the public.

As Hale says, “We’re not packaging products, we’re packaging Fossil.” In fact, the U.S. courts have ruled that the watch-in-a-tin is part of Fossil’s trade dress, as well as the shape of the original box. “The identification of Fossil with the tin is almost on the same level as the identification of Coca-Cola with the hourglass bottle,” says Hale. The tins have become so popular that they’ve become collectibles in their own right, as intended.

“We started assigning dates and serial numbers to them, like baseball cards, so collectors could keep track of them,” Hale says. “And they do. These days, when we go to flea markets, we see a lot of Fossils.”
Brand “Frags”

In 1984 design planner and theorist Jay Doblin of the respected Doblin Group noticed how brands have become paramount to corporate identity in the minds of consumers. To illustrate the power of effective brands, Doblin created a quiz out of fragments of national and global logos, which he flashed on a screen a few seconds at a time. Doblin called the quiz “Frags.” Here we’ve updated Doblin’s 20-year-old quiz with some contemporary logos. See if you can name the brands based on the close-up portions shown. You will probably be surprised by how many you can identify – a compelling argument for why distinctive graphic branding, applied often and consistently, is key to a strong corporate identity program.
Dyson Fills a Vacuum

James Dyson studied industrial design at England's Royal Academy of Art and ended up selling vacuum cleaners. But Dyson didn't leave design in the dust. He used it to draw attention to the superior features of his Dual Cyclone vacuum cleaner and create a look so futuristic and fun that homemakers love to bring it out of the closet.

"Y"ou're a designer so what makes you think you know anything about manufacturing?" "You're a designer so what makes you think you know anything about marketing?" "You're a designer so what makes you think you know anything about making money?"

As James Dyson recalls it, these were the three questions he kept hearing from venture capitalists when he sought funding for his radical Dual Cyclone vacuum cleaner concept. Struggling against the bad reputation designers get as businessmen, he also wrestled with the challenges facing any small entrepreneur. Against the odds, Dyson proved that designers could be as effective in bringing their products to market as they are in creating them.

Today Dyson's breakthrough "bagless" vacuum cleaner commands a 50% market share in the UK and has become the model for appliance innovation. Since its launch in 1993, Dyson Appliances Ltd., located in Malmesbury, England, has generated sales of more than $2 billion worldwide and spawned legions of imitations from the same entrenched industry players who earlier declined to license his fledgling invention. This September Dyson will begin marketing his vacuum cleaner in America, after buying back the rights from Fantom, a U.S. licensee that has been producing an early version of Dyson's technology for the past eight years. Dyson's foray into developing vacuum cleaner technology happened by chance.

In 1978, while renovating his 300-year-old farmhouse, Dyson became frustrated with the poor performance of his conventional vacuum. "Whenever I went to use it, there was no suck in it. One day I thought I would find out what was wrong with the design," he relates. He noted that the appliance worked by drawing air through the bag to create suction, but when even a fine layer of dust got inside, it clogged its pores, stopping the airflow and suction. He tried other brands and found they all had the same problem. "Here was a product that people used every day and it had a real Achilles heel," he says.

In his usual style of seeking solutions from unexpected sources, Dyson thought of how a nearby sawmill
used a cyclone—a 30-foot-high cone that spun dust out of the air by centrifugal force—to expel waste. He reasoned that a vacuum cleaner that could separate dust by cyclonic action and spin it out of the airstream would eliminate the need for both bag and filter. Dyson set out to replicate the cyclonic system.

Five years and more than 5,000 prototypes later, he arrived at the Dual Cyclone machine—so named because an outer cyclone, rotating at 200 mph, removes large debris and most dust, while an inner cyclone, rotating at 924 mph, creates an intense gravitational force to drive the finest dust, including particles of cigarette smoke, out of the air.

outside-of-the-box thinking (or in this case, outside-of-the-bag) led James Dyson to come up with the world’s first bagless vacuum cleaner. His inspiration came from studying the 30-foot-high dust-filtration cyclone tower on a nearby sawmill and then applying the same principles on a much smaller scale.

At first, Dyson sought funding to develop his product from the company that manufactured his successful “Ballbarrow,” (a lightweight wheelbarrow with a plastic bag for a wheel, which easily rode over ruts and broken ground without leaving marks on lawns). Even though he owned a third of the company, the board rejected his request, insisting that “if there really was a better type of vacuum cleaner then surely one of the big manufacturers would be making it.”

Over the next eight years, Dyson tried to license his Dual Cyclone concept to established vacuum manufacturers, only to be turned down. At least two of these initial contacts forced him to file patent infringement lawsuits, which he won in out-of-court and in-court settlements. “Big companies aren’t really interested in new technology,” concludes Dyson. “They’re quite comfortable producing the things they’ve produced for a number of years. That staggered me.”

Finally in 1985, a small company in Japan contacted him out of the blue after seeing a picture of his vacuum cleaner in a magazine. Mortgaged to the hilt and on the brink of bankruptcy, Dyson took the cheapest flight to Tokyo to negotiate a deal. The result was the G-Force vacuum cleaner, priced at $2,000, which became the ultimate domestic appliance status symbol in Japan. “The Japanese love new technology and new designs,” he observes. “It’s almost a fashion market for selling electrical goods.” Still, wanting broader distribution, engineering and design are not viewed as separate disciplines; designers are as much involved in testing as engineers in developing conceptual ideas.

Dyson adds, “Products can only begin to become beautiful when they work well. Then design can be different for its own sake. You can make it orange-and-red, or pink-and-lavender, or silver-and-grey.” In the early ’80s, Dyson made his first Dual Cyclone model red-and-yellow. The G-Force version was lavender-and-pink. Dyson loves the whizbang and impact of such color use. “At the time, 18-20 years ago, pink wasn’t used in domestic appliances. They were gray or brown and occasionally a primary color like red—very sober, safe nature, counter culture. It goes against what people are currently choosing. It’s difficult to ask consumers what they think of a totally new concept because they don’t really know anything about it. They haven’t gotten used to it; they’re not familiar with it.” To Dyson, a see-through bin provided the benefit of knowing when the bin was full and seeing the cyclones in action. “You see what you’re doing; there’s a kind of delight in it.” The consumer agreed. The clear bin has become a signature of Dyson’s design.

Not one to accept the status quo, Dyson is continually trying to achieve cutting-edge improvements in household appliances that have changed little over the decades. In addition to a revolutionary new washing machine, his company is working on a robotic vacuum cleaner, equipped with sensory devices, that can navigate its way around a room, knowing which way to go, where it has cleaned and when it is finished.

“We’re not interested in just creating another designer product,” Dyson stresses. “We’re interested in doing something where we come up with breakthrough technology which makes a radical improvement in the product. It’s all about performance. We stick to things where there is fantastic improvement.” Dyson is confident that his robotic cleaner, currently in home trials, will eventually succeed. He predicts, “I think in 5-10 years time, we’ll consider it fairly unusual if we’re actually pushing a vacuum around the home.”
While designer/inventor/entrepreneur provocateur James Dyson vigorously advocates designing from the “inside out,” he also likes to shake up existing thinking about appliance designs and color schemes. “Conventional looks don’t make a product more marketable. Just as the technology was different, the machine should look different because designing a new product is about surprising people, rather like a work of art.”

Visible Technology
Instead of hiding the technology behind an opaque casing, Dyson left it exposed and used color to draw attention to it—creating the impression of fuel rockets on a spaceship launch pad.

More Suction Power
The Dyson Rod/Cyclone™ upright model goes a step beyond the original concept. Not only does it give constant suction, its multiple cyclones allow 45% more suction than the basic Dual Cyclone™ design. The diameter of each cyclone is scaled down by the square root of the number of cyclones—hence the name Rod.

Fun With Color
Dyson vacuums have disproved the notion that domestic appliances have to look bland to be taken seriously.

Website Support
The Dyson website uses icons to pose questions to help customers decide which model to buy.

Robot Cleaner
Dyson continually seeks to go beyond the status quo. Home trials are under way for a new battery-operated robot vacuum, called the DC06, which will clean a room on its own.

“We wanted it to look like a piece of NASA technology. Its superior performance has to be visible. It has to look the business.”

Clear Bin
Although focus groups advised against a clear bin, Dyson believed that users enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing how much dirt the machine picked up.

No Empty Styling
Dyson frowns on what he calls “empty styling” and encourages designers to think in terms of improving functionality. Color is more than a design device, it serves to call out important features of the product.

Skair Friendly
The Dyson cylinder vacuum was designed for people who prefer to pull rather than push. The overall shape of the vacuum makes for a low center of gravity that allows the appliance to be pulled easily and sit securely on stairs.
Sign Language
Before the PC, copywriters, designers and printers communicated text changes on type galleys through shorthand symbols. But lately proofreading marks—once as familiar as commas and periods—have become a forgotten language. Today what serves as proofreading is often notoriously flawed grammar and spell-check software. Digital-age communicators, used to making corrections directly on the computer, sometimes aren't sure how to mark up printed proofs, so they write lengthy instructions in the margin with lines, arrows and circles pointing to the offending section—much to the confusion of designers and printers. There is a clearer and more concise way. Below are basic proofreading symbols that everyone should know and use.

---

The dog is lazy.
Sleeping is the dog's favorite pastime.
When he sleeps, he is out like a light.
The dog not only sleeps a lot but he also snores.
His snoring sounds like a lumberjack sawing down a tree.
Yesterday, the noise brought a brown fox out to investigate.
He gently poked the sleeping dog. The dog didn't stir. Hal.
The fox took two steps back and jumped. bold
He could have jumped on the dog, but he didn't. bold/italic
Instead, he jumped over the dog. rem.
When the fox landed, the floor shook. Thump!
For such a light weight fox, he made quite a thud.
The fox was pleased. He was sure he had awakened the dog.
The dog sniffled then turned over and continued to snore.
This time, the fox backed up further to allow a running start.
With perfect aim the fox (squarely) landed on the dog's tail.
The dog jumped up with a howl. He spun around and saw the fox.
"Hello!" said the fox, grinning.
"I'm bored. Why don't you come play with me?"
"In your dreams," said the dog, closing his eyes. small
One For the Road

Revitalizing a brand identity involves more than coming up with an attractive logo. For International Truck and Engine Corporation, it was a soul-searching odyssey that led to defining who they are, what they stand for and why customers should place their faith in their products.

As CEO John Horne tells it, he first realized that the company he headed needed to clarify its identity when he asked for a two-page summary of International’s brand identity and got back 20 pages. “It said to me that we really didn’t know what made us special,” he says. “We needed a brand that our people would be proud of, that would let them say, ‘This is who we are and what we are.’ We wanted customers to see our trucks and say, ‘That’s an International.’”

Restructuring from a decade earlier, however, had left customers and even employees confused about International’s identity. Previously known as International Harvester, the 171-year-old company had sold off its legendary farm equipment unit in 1983 and dropped the “tractor-inspired” logo, designed by Raymond Loewy. The parent company adopted Navistar International for its corporate name, but kept International Truck and Engine as the brand name for its remaining business unit. As a result, some employees weren’t sure whether they worked for Navistar or International, and some consumers thought the company still made tractors. Still others thought that Navistar was the name of one of its truck models.

Knowing it needed help, International turned to brand advertising specialist Fallon Minneapolis and its design division, Duffy, to bring clarity to its brand. First off, Fallon/Duffy went on a round of interviews with dealers, owners, drivers, maintenance people and employees to learn just how the company was perceived. On the positive side, they heard that International was grounded in solid Midwestern work ethics—reliable, honest, hard-working, with pride in a job well done, common sense and ingenuity. Unfortunately, the brand was also still linked to farmers, which, to many, connoted old-fashioned, unchanging, plain and dull.

The positive attributes, however, were “the glue that began to hold it together,” says Duffy account director Chris Heimbold. “We realized that anything we created, whether it be the logo or a trade show exhibit, needed to reflect that personality, those values that International shared with the consumer.”

Fallon/Duffy were also mindful of bringing forth the brand’s existing equity. In focus groups, they asked people for their impressions of the company’s blue triple diamond logo from the ’70s and the then-current
orange diamond logo. The blue triple diamond with outlined edges evoked animated emotions. “People who weren’t even around when the logo was in use talked at length about its hand-crafted, forged from steel, industrial look,” says Heimbold.

On the other hand, people recognized the orange logo, which was dubbed the “Diamond Road” when it was created in the 1980s. But they failed to see how the two triangles were meant to suggest a road disappearing into the distance. “Some said it was a monument in the middle or two triangles back-to-back,” says Heimbold. “Others linked the shape and orange color to a highway construction sign, which a few read to mean caution.” People attached the orange logo to International, but gave it no further meaning.

Creative director Joe Duffy adds, “We heard over and over from customers and people inside that the diamond was generic-looking. It didn’t speak to the quality of the product, nor reflect the craftsmanship and all the care and concern that went into their product.”

Still, for better or worse, International owned the color orange and the diamond symbol, so “it was an instance of asking how we could make something we would be proud of out of that,” Duffy says.

More pragmatically, Duffy recognized that International had hundreds of dealerships across the country and thousands of trucks bearing the old orange logo. “We knew that the company couldn’t take the capital expense hit to change out all of those immediately,” says Heimbold. “It would have to be a multiyear process. We couldn’t be in conflict with the existing logo.”

“We wanted the change to be a transition from where they were as opposed to a complete redesign,” Duffy adds. “We wanted to retain the brand elements that International truly owned, while making the logo more contemporary and reflective of the company’s positive attributes.”

The need to stick with the orange wasn’t mandated by International. Horne admits that some executives used to refer to it as “citrus orange,” so he was not against making a change. “When Joe asked if we had to keep the orange, my response was ‘not unless we need to.’” Horne adds admiringly, “Joe went back and brightened and sharpened the orange. Duffy looked at our heritage and history, the way International was written across our old logo, and brought that forward.”

---

**Preserving Heritage**
Sensitive to preserving existing brand equity and reflecting the heritage of the company, Duffy Design searched International’s archives to see how the brand has evolved. They then conducted focus groups with key constituents (employees, dealers, owners, drivers, etc.) to learn what brand elements were associated with the company and the emotional qualities they evoked. Preliminary sketches were then shown to focus groups for feedback before proceeding to the final design.

---

**ABCDEFHJKLM NOPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234567890 INTERNATIONAL**

**Official Typeface**
The designers wanted to retain some of the familiarity of the old typelies, so they created a modified version of Akzidenz-Grotesk. The customized font offers the bold industrial look they sought.

---

**New Things Ahead**
The directional arrow served as a graphic device to point to what’s new in the branding program.

---

**Brand Program**
Duffy created the overall brand architecture for International and developed interactive, CD-ROM and print communications materials to launch the program.

---

**Three-Dimensional Logo**
The three-dimensional metallic look of the logo creates the impression that it was forged out of steel and communicates strength, durability and craftsmanship.

---

**Brand Kit**
Distributed to the Leadership Council, the brand building kit explained the purpose behind the brand repositioning and featured the new Brand Promise.

---

**Brand Starter Kit**
All the brand elements—logo, logotype, colors, typography, and the new brand promise—were covered on a CD-ROM, packaged with perforated color swatches.

---

**Alternate Materials**
Knowing the logo would be used on everything from mud flaps to leather jackets, Duffy rendered the logo on different materials to check its consistency and look.
For the designers, the process was iterative. Duffy tested different concepts out on focus groups. To get around the former image, one version included the words “truck and engine,” but respondents considered that unnecessary, pointing out that the logo would be seen on trucks. Another version placed the diamond within a circle, but it was ruled out because it made the diamond-shape harder to see. The version that was finally selected by management threw out everything that was superfluous, pulling the company name within the framework of the mark and dimensionalizing elements through a silver outline. The effect was medal-like. “It looked like someone went into a factory and forged the thing out of steel,” says Heimbold.

Duffy adds, “The three-dimensional quality gave the logo the bold industrial feel of a product built to last. It suggested that this company makes a great product for the road. That was what we were trying to express.”

It also dovetailed with International’s new brand positioning, summed up in a succinct 20-word Brand Promise: “International listens, understands, and delivers the best ways to move our customers ahead. On the road and in their business.” For the company, clarifying that message also entailed dropping the Navistar name on everything but its Wall Street listing. “International is who we are as a company. It’s how our customers see us. We support a single brand,” management declared.

Both Duffy and International management were committed to launching the new identity in an unequivocal way so that customers and employees alike would know that this was more than a cosmetic change—a revitalized look matched by a re-energized philosophy.

Duffy tested the logo for consistency in various applications and treatments in one color, two colors, flat colors, three-dimension, stitched on cloth, stamped on leather, and molded out of metal. “We studied how this would have to live in a detailed way,” says Duffy. Perhaps the most challenging aspect was fitting the logo on the hood of the truck grill. The logo had to work within a predetermined diamond space (one reason a circular shape was quickly ruled out), and Duffy designers collaborated with manufacturing engineers to create a precise dimensional fit for the hood ornament.

Legibility on a moving truck, however, was not a concern. “We knew full well that from not too far away you weren’t going to be able to read ‘International,’” says Duffy. “Our goal was to make the mark, the shape and overall presence familiar, as opposed to reading it. No one needs to read McDonald’s or any other famous brand to know what it is.”

Duffy also wanted to distinguish between promoting the brand and overusing it to the point of tedium. “We did a range of iconography to create an overall look for the brand, as opposed to just taking the same logo and applying it over and over again,” he says.

Jacket sleeve patches and T-shirts followed the brand vocabulary in typography and style, but did not include the logo, somewhat to the chagrin of International. “For once they had a rallying point and that was the logo, and they wanted to use it as much as possible,” says Heimbold. “Our tendency was to take it a step further and create a visual vocabulary for them.” Duffy also met with merchandise licensees to
The three-dimensional quality gave the logo the bold industrial feel of a product built to last. It suggested that this company makes a great product for the road. That was what we were trying to express.

21st century, they looked closely at both their strengths and their weaknesses. "When you start talking about things like that, you really start saying that our brand is not only what our customers see in the product, but it is also a beacon that guides the behavior of all the people in the company," says Horne.

Horne's understanding of why the brand program was essential facilitated the design process. "Some people who head up companies feel that it is a necessary evil or something that isn't all that important," Duffy says. "But John embraced it as a symbol of change and moving forward and improvement. He made a very big deal about it, not only in our initial work, but in launching it. He wanted to do it right."

Doing it right meant seeking buy-in from employees, dealers, suppliers and customers so the conversion, which inevitably entails a fair amount of expense, would go smoothly. To help launch the new identity, the company asked Duffy to create a brand building kit for distribution to International's Leadership Council, CD-ROM, poster campaign, website and other materials. Importantly, International not only unveiled its new mark with fanfare, it explained the strategy behind it and why it should make a difference to the future of the company.

The reaction from employees, dealers, customers and suppliers has been enthusiastic, says Horne. And it has resulted in a new attitude and fresh look at the company—all to the good. "We used to be called aging-and-failing. Now we are called a very good company, and we are working on becoming a very great company," says Horne. "Without a great brand identity and a great Brand Promise, you will become a commodity rather than a great brand."

The Look of Metal
Duffy prepared a materials board and style guide to help dealership architects and exhibit designers understand the rugged, durable personality of the brand, translated here in the entrance to International's trade show exhibit.

Dealers Signage
International's dealer outlets appreciated the fact that the new logo retained the brand equity of the old. The sign was familiar to passersby, but looked richer, bolder and classier.

Trade Show Exhibit
Exhibit Works in Detroit created a trade show exhibit that captured the dynamic energy of International's new brand.

Launch Poster Series
International promoted awareness of its new logo and brand Promise through an internal poster campaign.

Grill Medallion
The grill for the new line of trucks was designed earlier, so the new logo medallion had to be created to fit the allotted space.
Business and Design Classic: Lego Brick

Robot action figures and beanie babies may come and go, but the humble Lego brick is forever. The very simplicity of Lego's design is its strength. By exercising the imagination, Legos can be turned into all kinds of shapes, from toy trains to skyscrapers.

The precursor of the Lego brick originated in 1932 with the son of a Danish master carpenter named Ole Kirk Christiansen who made wooden toys. Ole's son, Godfred Kirk, came up with a way to interlock wooden play blocks by putting rows of pegs on one side and matching cylindrical holes on the other. This created a secure coupling system that let children construct a variety of interesting shapes without toppling over the bricks.

The company adopted the name Lego, formed from the Danish words 'LEg GODt', meaning "play well." Much later, the toymaker discovered that, in Latin, the word lego means "I study" or "I put together."

By the 1950s, Lego was manufacturing colorful injection-molded plastic bricks, which were lighter and cheaper than wood. The Lego system of play was so successful in Denmark that the game maker began marketing its products in other countries. Today Lego is one of the world's ten largest toy manufacturers—the only one in Europe. Over the past 50 years, the company has sold more than 320 billion Lego bricks—roughly the equivalent of 52 Lego bricks for each of the world's six billion inhabitants.

For fans who fantasize about living in a world made entirely from Lego bricks, there's Legoland, an amusement park where everything from trains and castles to monuments and dinosaurs are made from jumbo Lego bricks.