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Organisation: Stanford James Limited

Scott Panel & Hardware "Inspiration" Campaign

June 1999 – December 2000

Business Need/Opportunity

Scott Panel & Hardware (part of Fletcher Challenge Building Products Group) is the leading supplier of products and services to the New Zealand furniture and joinery manufacturing industries. In recent years, Scott's growth has been based on building partnerships with its key customers, suppliers and colleagues (staff). However, the furniture and joinery supplier market was becoming increasingly competitive and was tending to become price-driven, rather than value-driven.

Scott wanted to change this trend and move away from becoming (or being seen as) a price-driven supplier of commodity products/services and instead grow its business (and profitability) by becoming a marketer of value-added products and services.

Stanford James, Scott's marketing communication agency, was asked to create and implement an integrated marketing communication campaign that would achieve this need and also build on Scott's existing partnerships, vision and values. As agency principal, I was responsible for overall campaign strategic development, planning and management of its implementation and evaluation.

Preliminary research

Regular market research is undertaken by Customer Value Management for Scott Panel & Hardware. It canvasses opinion about the value of doing business with Scott among joinery professionals, owners, managers, foremen and estimators. Results from 1997 to 1999 showed an impressive performance in the Scott "customer value," which was just below the best in the industry range.

Yet Scott wanted to take its business to the next level, reposition its brand(s) and differentiate itself from its competitors. Using the research as a springboard, Scott held focus groups and one-to-one discussions among customers to determine how they would like a new "value-added" service delivered. Brainstorming with Stanford James on communication strategies and options helped evolve the final campaign theme and programme.

The outcome was a thorough analysis of where Scott was and where it wanted to be.

Audiences

The results of the research and brainstorming pointed towards a communication campaign that would put a fresh focus of Scott influencer audiences and at the same time enhance relationships with Scott's core "trade" audiences.

- 1) Influencer audiences:
(These offer Scott opportunities to promote its world-class product brands and expand its design services strategies)

- architects/specifiers
 - designers
 - developers/builders (especially apartment and townhouse contractors).
- 2) Trade Audiences:
(Scott was looking to add value to these customers' businesses and gain benefits as a result)
- Key customers (top 150 who contribute 80 percent of revenue)
 - Other customers (total of 4000)
 - The furniture and joinery industry
- 3) Suppliers (more than 50 international and local)
- 4) Colleagues (staff) and parent company, Fletcher Challenge Ltd. Scott has a corporate support office and 13 TradeShops nationwide with a total of 180 employees. (Enrolling this audience was very important to the campaign's success.)
- 5) Media — this was a trade/specifier focussed campaign aimed at the editors of the leading specifier, furniture and joinery trade, design and building magazines.

Goal/Objectives

- Reposition Scott, its brands, products and services and differentiate Scott from its competitors while reinforcing its traditional vision and values.
- Create and implement strategies that will develop and grow relationships and business with influencer audiences.
- Promote Scott's products and services that add value to customers' businesses and improve relationships and sales as a result.

The success of the campaign was to be measured by:

- 1) Launching the campaign on time and on budget
- 2) Amount of new business generated and percentage increase in sales
- 3) Positive changes in customer value added survey results
- 4) Amount of media coverage generated
- 5) Acceptance by colleagues

Theme

To reposition Scott and emphasise the value-added market orientation, Stanford James created the positioning line:

“Scott — your source of inspiration”

It forms a common creative element for the campaign and is linked to specially developed marketing sub-brands such as Scott Innovation and Scott TradeShops. The "Inspiration" theme was central to the campaign's communication and visual elements. Scott wanted a bold new imagery that would make a big statement, have broad appeal across target audiences and grab attention. Key messages were emphasized — inspiration, motivation, commitment, passion, creativity, leadership, world-class, innovation and design.

Strategy and Implementation

A Stanford James team of three (plus two creatives) developed, managed and implemented the campaign. We had only three months from approval of the strategic elements to prepare and launch the creative from scratch. The whole programme had to be ready for a Feb 2000 launch but because magazine deadlines are brought forward to avoid the NZ Festive/Summer holiday break, all of the campaign's main print and advertising elements had to be completed before Christmas.

Stanford James worked closely with Scott's marketing manager Steve Allison to finalise the strategic and creative direction of the campaign. We made presentations to both the Scott marketing and management "Vision" teams to fully enrol them in the campaign. During the development and implementation we had weekly work-in-progress meetings with Steve Allison to review progress and strategic/brand direction.

Stanford James identified a series of communication tactics for each target audience based around the "Inspiration" theme. Thus, the campaign itself had to be inspirational, especially in its concepts and creative. It needed to reflect a vision that is simple in words, deep in meaning and powerful in execution. Spearheading the campaign's strong creative was a corporate profile, which was a scene-setter for the entire programme. Its photography and images dictated the inspirational look and branded Scott as a leading marketer of exclusive brands, world class products and services.

Early in the creative process it became obvious that existing Scott Panel & Hardware brand and brand values could not be extended to the new strategies. So a new series of sub brands was developed by Stanford James for these audiences. The Scott solutions-orientated services were promoted in specialist brochures on design services and business improvement, reinforcing messages about adding value to customers' businesses.

The "Inspiration" campaign was launched in Feb 2000 to both internal and external audiences. Scott and Stanford James recognized the credibility of the campaign rested with the company's colleagues. Adopting the Inspiration campaign was a major departure and its success was always going to be partially determined by how well the Scott team responded. It was alright to talk the talk but walking the talk depended on successfully enrolling the Scott team in the new inspirational marketing focus. Scott and Stanford James wanted to safeguard against any "credibility gap" between perception and reality so an internal communication briefing programme was developed to enroll colleagues and Fletcher Challenge audiences in the campaign prior to the external launch.

The external launch was marked with a special edition of Scott Perspective, the company's customer magazine, which is direct mailed to 5000 customers and specifiers nationally. The publication emphasised the "influencer" strategy, the Scott move "to break out of the mould" and adopt an "Inspirational" programme with some different branding. Of significance to the new marketing focus was the *Scott Innovation* brand covering design services, business improvement, and the Scott international marketing arm, FURNZ.

Corporate advertising was also a key initiative of the launch and campaign. Double-page colour spreads in carefully selected influencer and trade magazines highlighted the "Inspiration" theme and creative. Similar images were used in a wraparound faux cover for the February 2000 issues of *Architecture* and *Interior Detail(s)*. This unique innovation was negotiated by Stanford James with the publisher and presented by them to readers for the first time.

Stanford James targeted specialist media, briefing them on the campaign and supplying details tailored to particular requirements. It issued customer profiles endorsing Scott added value services, case studies and media releases with accompanying creative photography.

The Inspiration campaign was rolled out to "trade" customers through a nationwide roadshow at Scott TradeShops, and followed up with special displays and presentations at Scott's customer conference at Hamilton Island, Queensland, in July.

These activities were chosen to gain maximum impact among the target audiences within the constraints of budget. While a large launch function at the Imax/Planet Hollywood was considered, the tactics (above) were preferred to achieve sustained impact rather than gain a "big bang."

Other elements included a presentation tools together with an upmarket Inspiration folder and a utilitarian version for quotations and tenders and an Inspiration advertising template for local TradeShops.

Since the launch Stanford James has maintained an ongoing media relations and corporate advertising programme to build on the launch. We also redesigned and printed Scott's kitchen accessories brochure and Scott's trade catalogue of 15,000 line items to fit with the Inspiration theme. The catalogue was developed simultaneously with an electronic version, created especially for Scott's newly revamped interactive web site, which went live just prior to Christmas 2000. This site has been engineered to allow for future e-commerce capability.

The *Scott Inspiration* profile proved so popular an "edited" 8-page version for "day-to-day" use and to give to new staff members has been produced.

Results and Evaluation

- The Scott Panel & Hardware "Inspiration" marketing communication campaign was launched as scheduled in February 2000 on time and on budget. The ongoing campaign, catalogue and web site have also been produced on time and on budget.
- Scott Panel & Hardware's revenues in the 12 months January –December 2000 are up 9.8 percent on the previous year in what has been a static furniture and joinery market. Scott attributes a large proportion of this increase to the success of the "Inspiration" campaign.
- The results of the Dec 2000 Customer Valued Added survey shows Scott's customers have moved their purchasing emphasis by 5 percentage points away from "cost and price" to "products and services" where Scott is performing better. The same survey shows Scott has a competitive lead over its competitors on all non-price high impact drivers.
- The "Inspiration" campaign has been particularly successful with influencer audiences. Scott's new Design Services division has grown from nothing to a level of \$4.5million worth of business in under two years. It has taken on five key "partner" companies who wish to join in the success of the programme and has opened a stand alone design services showroom. The success of the campaign targeting architects/specifiers has led Scott to hiring dedicated architectural sales representatives and the establishment of robust relationships with at least 50 of the top architectural practices nationwide.

- Media coverage has been impressive, with magazines featuring case studies and profiles on the campaign and highlighting elements of the creative. A major publisher has implemented a series of profiles on inspirational personalities associated with Scott.
- Scott colleagues have responded with enthusiasm and excitement and wholeheartedly adopted the Inspiration theme. They were enrolled through the quality and professionalism of the campaign material and by being kept informed on the important stages of its development.