

STRETE/Bristol Bags -- Rebranding Case Study

The Brand:

Bristol Bags was a manufacturer of industrial-strength security bags used in the banking/money transfer business. However, they had excess capacity due to two issues: the downturn in the financial sector, and the fact their existing product simply didn't "obsolete" or wear out as quickly as it might. So they investigated alternate products that might incorporate their sturdy materials, handmade craftsmanship and expert production facility, and decided to develop a line of Bicycle Messenger Bags.

The Challenge:

Develop a new product line, branding and credible marketing program in a very competitive category.

- Develop products using in-person consults and focus groups with bike messengers to create a product durable yet stylish enough to win their endorsement – and therefore be more credible to the larger public
- Create a strong branding that speaks to both ruggedness and stylishness and holds its own effectively versus strong competition

Solution:

I worked with Biersma Creative, a design firm in Chicago, to make the product and branding a reality:

1. We ran focus groups with a hip, up-and-coming designer and bike messengers, and developed product attributes and design points that were passed along to Bristol for incorporation in the actual product...and we used their commentaries to guide us in crafting the attendant branding.
2. I developed a brand profile that characterized and positioned the product as being 'professionally tough,' 'built, not sewn,' etc., incorporating all the intrinsic that would give it cred with consumers and professional users.
3. A whole host of alternative names were created over the course of several weeks, including:

Avnu	Streete	QuikLok
Banque	Strete	Speedlock
Banq (BANQ)	Streetscape	Bristol
Bank	Dasher	BristolLock
Banck	DasherBag	Lockerpack
Tuf	Avenue 1800	LockPack
Tough	Aulock	Lockerbag
Tuph	B-Lock	Lockbag
Elamite	Frate	Rider
Rgged	Freighter	Ryder
SpeedRat	Spreed	Rhino
Speedbag	Crux	Rhinobag
Speedmetier	1800	Velock
Ariel	1800D	VeloMark
Savage	Lock	VeloCity
Safetipack	Locke	
Armor	Lok	

4. After boildown to a list of five, we used a **voting intranet site** to allow all stakeholders – the client, the designer, the messengers, the manufacturing workers – to pick their favorite.

- We then developed brand looks and Web site concepts that included the preliminary product designs, with logomark variations – and **a set of product names I also created, derived from the masterbrand, “Strete™”** such as stretePruf, streteByte, streteFlyte, for various models.

The screenshot shows the Strete website homepage. At the top left is the Strete logo. To the right are navigation links: Home, SHOPPING CART (0) Items, and My Account. Below the logo is a vertical menu with links: ABOUT US, BAGS, NEWS, and CONTACT US. A central text block reads: "strete is what happens when a fashion-forward designer, a bunch of bike messengers with attitude, and old-line American craftsmen decide to create the ultimate messenger bag." To the right is a slogan: "SO IT'S SHARP. SMART. RUGGED. IT'S STRETE." accompanied by an image of a person riding a bike. A large banner across the middle says "TOUGH ENOUGH?" with "IS YOUR BAG" on the left and a close-up of a bike's front fork on the right. Below the banner are three product sections: stretePruf (a tan and green bag), streteByte (a red and yellow bag), and streteFlyte (an orange and tan bag). Each section includes a brief description of the bag's features. On the left side of the product section is a vertical call to action: "SUBMIT YOUR PHOTO FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A FREE BAG" with an image of a person taking a photo. At the bottom of the page is a footer with navigation links: Home | About Us | Bags | News | Contact Us | Shopping Cart, and a copyright notice: COPYRIGHT © 2008 STRETE MESSENGER BAG. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Outcome:

An unexpected uptick in the client’s core business, and the departure of their marketing director, meant the end of this project, unfortunately.