





you got the look

The conversation had only been flowing for about 90 seconds when the ‘B’ word was used. Brand. This is a story that’s very big on brand values.

Projecting those self same brand values, internally and externally, is invariably a key driver in a Mix case study. Rarely though, have we heard an organisation explain so precisely and lucidly what their values mean. The conversation was with the engaging and energised Fran Theanne, the Concept Design Manager at fast growing and dynamic New Look.

Discussing the background to New Look’s move to impressive new West End offices, Fran sketched for us the impetus behind the fashion retailer’s stellar growth. ‘We’ve applied new concepts to the business, with a prime focus on the look and feel of the stores. Starting with our Liverpool Concept store (designed by Caulder Moore), we’ve done some exciting and innovative things and rolled out a really successful new look. What’s more, we’ve had the confidence to do it in this economic climate – and it’s paying off. Key elements of that campaign are incorporated here at Mortimer Street. The brand has moved on in customers’ eyes in terms of offer, fashionability and price.’

So, we asked, what exactly are the New Look brand values?

‘Confidence, impatience...and fun! Confidence in what we do, and confidence in knowing our customers. Confidence in our offer and the choice we offer. And confidence in how we communicate – which is never dictatorial. Our impatience is about our appetite to succeed, and to succeed now. We’re fast becoming a global brand. This year we’ve opened in Russia, Singapore and Holland – and we already have over 25 stores in Saudi’

‘There’s an all-pervasive atmosphere at New Look,’ adds Adam Harris of CBRE, the designers of the Mortimer Street interiors. ‘It’s very impressive – everyone wants to be the best.’



case study



▶▶▶ Monday may well no longer be available on Friday if she doesn't buy it there and then.

'We took a lot of care over the design brief for Mortimer Street because we wanted a really good quality fit-out. A big part of our thinking was that it's a tough call to ask loyal staff to relocate, to uproot from Weymouth. It had to be worth it for them. Our people made sacrifices – we made sure that their new working environment wasn't a problem. We've given them a new home with lots of light, great technology, superb breakout spaces, fantastic chairs and so on.'

'We paid a lot of attention to quality and detailing,' agrees Adam. 'The staff tested all the furniture, and we gathered plenty of feedback from the trials. It's great that Herman Miller's new Embody chair was chosen – it's a new benchmark, leading edge.'

'Embody? We wanted the piece that says 'you know what...?'' smiles Fran.

We toured the light and airy offices while Adam explained the design principles. 'The timeframes were challenging! From initial meetings in March and April, we were producing space plans by late April. We put out a two stage tender so we could get the Main Contractor on board quickly. ISG were appointed at least in part because we needed to work with subcontractors that understood the design quickly – it was very time critical. We had a very good Cat A base-build fit-out to work with – designed by MoreySmith – so we needed to respect that, and worked well with the Landlord's team. With a phased occupancy, the first New Look people were moving in on 1st August.

'The essence of our design was to co-locate groups near their range rooms. There's continuous circulation around the space via a 'runway' with ready access to the inner zone and the merchandisers and buyers. Having looked at lots of systems we chose 120 degree bench style Abak workstations; good quality which helped everyone buy into the openness of the design. By each workstation there's a 'tallboy' to accommodate clothing. At 600mm wide, we developed it to have maximum flexibility with all manner of internals that can be changed around to suit the individual. And the palette's not too corporate: we used silver, beige, black and brown for various accents to reflect New Look's brand colours. For the range rooms we developed custom made joinery, with 600mm deep internals, for garment rails and shelving. There's retail-like display mesh on ▶▶▶▶▶



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This theme of reflecting the spirit of the New Look brand is carried through into the Press Room – a vital element for a dynamic, fast moving, fashion brand.

'This is a fantastic Press Room – we didn't have one before,' says Fran. 'We've already been visited by all the women's magazines, the London papers and a long list of celebrities: when someone like Pixie Lott is papped wearing New Look, it's crucial to our success! The Press Room is almost a replica of the fitting room in our

Liverpool store – same carpet, same lights, same feel.

'We've done the same thing in our meeting rooms and public facing areas; replicating the feel of the stores...and constantly changing too. The marketing department on the third floor is even built around a shop window – it is a shop window!'

Confirming how New Look has gone out of its way to look after its staff, we visit the cafe before we leave. 'This is all about great facilities for our staff – an extra step,' explains Fran with pride. 'We're in the heart

of the West End with no shortage of places for people to go, but we've gone the extra mile to prove their worth to us with a brilliant space complete with internet access, funky furniture...even sculptures in Portland Stone!'

The 'B' word? New Look is a place that writes the rules when it comes to brand ●

essential ingredients

Client:	• New Look
Interior Design, Project Manager, M&E & QS:	• CB Richard Ellis 020 7182 2000
Contributory Concept Design:	• Caulder Moore 020 8332 0393
Main Contractor:	• ISG Fit-Out Solutions 020 7247 1717
Furniture Supply:	• Workstation 020 7250 0400
Systems Furniture & Seating:	• Herman Miller 020 3077 0500
Carpets:	• Desso 01235 554848
Meeting Rooms:	• Weisner Hager 020 7490 3627
Range Rooms:	• Kusch + Co 020 7336 7561
Cafe Furniture:	• Davison Highley 01494 881912

