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What is service design?

It's relatively easy to understand how good design can add value to a manufacturing business in the form of easy to use and attractive products, or packaging that fits perfectly into a target market and even creative branding that raises awareness and increases demand. These outcomes of design are produced by distinct design disciplines but often produced in isolation with the different types of design expertise being compartmentalised.

Vive Juicebars, a Welsh company that explored their service journeys with support from Design Wales



What's more difficult to grasp is how design can add any significant value to the development of a service-based business. Service science and service innovation are well established within management consultancy but more recently 'service design' has been emerging as a holistic approach that utilises design methodology and creativity to ensure a business consistently delivers what its customers want. The holistic approach of service design maps every aspect of how a customer becomes aware of and interacts with a service, frequently gaining insight from customers and staff, and then applies creative and often visual techniques to explore and define the best solution. Understanding customer needs and creatively finding solutions are the core skills of every designer – what's new with service design is the application of these skills and the use of a diverse collection of related techniques applied to truly transform how a business might function. This is illustrated here by a case study from Denmark about the Max Bank, a 100 year old business that revolutionised the way it delivered its services whilst retaining its core values of integrity and security.

Every business is a service business.

In addition to accepting that design can be at the heart of how a service business develops, a further challenge is the realisation that every business in every sector is experienced as a service by its customers and as such should review the design of that service to add further value to their overall business offering. By working with specialist service design agency Engine, Design Wales developed several case studies to illustrate how service design might benefit different types of business, including manufacturers whose strength has to date been based on technology. These virtual case studies can be found in a more detailed document about service design in the 'Resources' section of the Design Wales website www.designwales.org

Providing inspiration and insight.

In 2006 a Design Wales seminar provided an overview of service design to over 70 delegates with input from Orange, Guinness Storehouse and Engine. Last year we produced a comprehensive document that provides greater detail and includes examples of how small and medium sized businesses could benefit.

We have now produced this digital magazine to further highlight the potential benefits of using design to develop service businesses. In October we will continue this theme when there will be a unique opportunity to hear how businesses from across Europe manage both their new product and service development - for more details, visit the Design Wales website ('News and Events' section).

An opportunity for Welsh business and Welsh design.

Many of the companies highlighted in the press as successfully using service design (such as Orange, Visa and Virgin Atlantic) are large and usually already used to investing in design. Several of these have seen such a benefit that they have recruited in-house service design managers. Despite these successful examples service design is still only just emerging as a distinct design discipline and as such we believe it offers significant opportunities for both Welsh industry in being able to further add value to their offering and specifically to the design sector in developing expertise that will be in increasing demand across the UK and further afield

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Max Bank: Capitalising on service design

When Max Bank decided that one of the ways of changing from traditional bank to an innovative, service-oriented bank would be to change the interior design into a café setting, they made banking history. The investment in service design did pay off. The year after the implementation of café-banking, the Danish bank had the best result in its 100-year history of business.

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Denmark has a well deserved reputation for good product and furniture design but the following case study demonstrates how a well established business transformed itself using service design in order to meet the changing needs of its customers.

In 2001, one of Denmark's oldest banks, Max Bank, took the bold decision to invest in service design; replacing its traditional counter service with a café-style environment designed to put customers at ease and transform the nature of their relationship with the bank.

The strategy paid off; the following year, Max Bank had the best result in its 100-year history and the highest customer satisfaction ratings of all Danish banks. The café concept earned Max Bank a place in Denmark's 2006 Innovation Cup, where it was picked as one of the country's most innovative companies. Max Bank also represented Denmark at the Retail Institute's international retail conference as the most innovative chain in Denmark.

Max Bank was established in 1901 in Næstved, under its original name of Håndværkerbanken ("The craftsmen's bank"). In 2004 it was rebranded as Max Bank, to express the bank's goal of "going for the max" in the interest of customers, shareholders and staff. The bank employs around 200 people in its eight branches across Denmark, all of which have implemented the unconventional café banking concept.

From Tradition to Innovation: A New Service Concept

Like most other banks, Max Bank used to serve customers at the traditional counter. But in the face of growing competition, the bank developed a new strategic plan in 2001 to develop the best customer relations of any bank in Denmark by shifting from tradition to innovation. One element in this comprehensive strategic plan was to change the interior design to reflect the bank's values in a modern and innovative way.

"To make banking a viable business today, you have to stand out from the crowd and be innovative. That is the way to generate growth which benefits the customers. We knew that we had to differentiate ourselves from the competition in order to survive. And we were going to do that by being different and by offering the best service. To achieve this, we contacted experts in different fields to assist us," says Hans Verner Larsen, Managing Director of Max Bank.

A Make-Over

Designer and homeliness expert Birgitte Rodh, consultancy firm Retail Institute Scandinavia, and ad agency COMING/1 were engaged to assist in the bank's make-over.

"We made a deliberate choice to include competencies from a variety of industries in connection with the make-over of the bank, as we felt that this would ensure the best result; the designer has an important and crucial role, as the designer's creativity brings new and different perspectives into the problem-solving process," says Hans Verner Larsen.

Together with Retail Institute Scandinavia the bank decided on changing the interior design into a café setting, making banking history with the decision to replace counters with sofas.

Although the new strategy meant major changes, it was important for the bank to remain true to its essential values. Hans Verner Larsen explains: "Although, in a sense, the café concept helped introduce an entirely new style in Max Bank, the café is in fact just an extension and a reflection of the bank's values and history. We have always been different and done things differently. Hence, the café concept was a good and credible modernisation of the bank."



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◀ **New Design Holds
New Possibilities**

The café concept set new standards for the way customers move through a Max Bank branch and what they can do while they are at the bank.

In a traditional bank, the interior design tends to constrain customer's movements, as most service transactions take place at the counter. The café setup offers the individual customer more latitude. Additionally, it helps create a less hierarchical space, as there are no counters, desks, or counselling areas.

The bank's focus on service design helps put bank and customer on a more equal footing, which creates the basis for a financial friendship.

"Max Bank's café design presents the bank as an open and laid-back company with an emphasis on service and an even dialogue. The café setup also provides flexibility, as tables, chairs and room-dividers are light and mobile. This design concept promotes mobility and personal choice. Max Bank's interior design is a good example of user-oriented service design," **says Birgitte Rodh.**

**Good Service is
Good Business**

Max Bank has worked strategically with service design to be able to meet any customer's needs and maximise customer satisfaction. "In banking, good service is crucial for the bank's ability to maintain its customer base and bring in new customers to generate growth. Café-banking lets us adapt our services to the individual customer. For example, parents can bring their children, and while the parents discuss bank matters over a cup of coffee in the soft furniture, the kids watch a cartoon in the pillow corner with a bag of sweets. It is crucial for Max Bank to provide good service, as this turns a bank visit into a welcome break for the customer," says Hans Verner Larsen.

While traditional banks place the emphasis on short customer visits, Max Bank has extended visits; the café encourages customers to stick around, laying the foundation for a personal relationship between bank and customer.

"Our focus on service design has helped form the basis for the bank's close customer relations – and this is, essentially, good for business," says Hans Verner Larsen.

A Homely Bank

While early versions of the concept at first sight looked like a café inside a bank, the latest Max Bank branch in Århus looks more like a café than a bank. Only the flat-screen monitors displaying the latest economic figures give anything away.

"We chose this interior design approach because we wanted to move the living room into the public space and create a homely bank. It offers the customers a safe and natural environment and it's a service we want to offer because homeliness provides a good basis for the meeting between customer and bank," says Hans Verner Larsen.

The change also accommodates shifting trends in the world of banking, as most customers now handle their everyday financial business online. This means customers might only visit their bank a few times a year, unless the bank offers good, innovative services – a trend that Max Bank seeks to factor into the design of all its branches, particularly the latest one.



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“We have used design to make the new branch more informal in order to promote a homely and relaxed atmosphere, and we have established a wireless internet connection. This lets customers handle their bank business in front of the computer in a homely setting. And that is a service that our customers appreciate,” says Hans Verner Larsen.

Design plays a key role in all Max Bank’s branches. Both the overall setting and the details have been approached from a design perspective to ensure consistency and a clear design philosophy. The Århus branch in particular expresses a strong awareness of service design. Birgitte Rodh suggested the use of wood in the interior design because as an organic material that takes a long time to mature, it indirectly emphasises the bank’s core values of time and quality.

A Chance that Paid off

Despite the thorough groundwork, launching the café concept meant taking a risk. Hans Verner Larsen explains: “A distinct service design may attract new customers, but it also risks putting off existing customers. So we considered it carefully before we gave the go-ahead for the idea of combining bank and café.”

The challenge with the café concept was that the traditional bank design with counters and counselling areas was gone, so the customers had to get used to the idea of discussing private financial issues in an open, public space. Despite this challenge, management decided to take the chance, based on a strong belief that design pays off and a certainty that the café concept was the right idea for modernising Max Bank.

What does the Future Hold?

Max Bank is part of a growing market with rapid development and numerous new competitors. The bank has to continue to be innovative and improve its service design, if it is to keep the title as Denmark’s most customer-friendly bank.

“The evaluation of the experiences from Århus will form the basis for an assessment of the café concept and its future in other branches. But I can easily imagine a Max Bank in central Copenhagen, because our café concept forms the basis for good, customer-friendly service. That is why Max Bank is also going to be among the future banks in Denmark,” Hans Verner Larsen concludes

Max Bank’s 6 steps to successful service design:

/1 Recognise your limitations:

Be open-minded, and allow yourself to find inspiration in areas outside your own immediate settings.

/2 Ensure clarity:

You must be aware of your own values and goals from the outset. Define your objectives and expectations of the project, and make sure that they match the designer’s goals and expectations.

/3 Find the right designer:

Do some market research and listen to recommendations.

/4 Include design from the outset:

Include the design aspect in all work processes. That ensures the best and most consistent result.

/5 Get involved:

Be active, and take part in the design process. It is important that you have a key role in managing the process.

/6 Be committed:

Involve the entire company in the design process. This gives all employees a sense of ownership over the project.

Note: This article is a summary of the case study published by the **Danish Design Centre DDC**, text by **Sanne Lund Hansen**. The full version of this story can be downloaded from http://ddc.dk/ERHVERV/designcases/Maxbank_case

Baltic: Customer experience project

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Services are delivered through a dynamic system of people, processes, technology and probably other services. Understanding the various aspects of this system requires a diverse range of techniques and engagement with staff and customers.

The following case study highlights how specialist service design company live|work engaged staff from the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in understanding customers' expectations and experiencing their service in relation to others in the area. Live|work recently partnered with BALTIC, Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead in North East England [<http://www.balticmill.com>] to help create and prototype new customer experiences. By working closely with a group of 16 members of staff from different levels across the whole organisation, the project looked at improving the existing customer experience through co-design with the staff. This is their story...

The project began with the staff being given **Camera Probes** to record what they believed to be good and bad customer experiences both in and out of BALTIC. The results provided the group with a set of key customers

'needs' and possible 'opportunities' on which to base the new service proposals. The next stage asked the staff to act as customers when they were sent out on **Service Safaris**. Each of the five Safaris involved a different type of customer experience, ranging from visiting McDonalds, buying a book from Waterstones, to spending the day at the local Sea-life centre. These experiences allowed the participants to understand how services work outside of BALTIC and reflect on how they compare to the services that BALTIC provides. The output of these tasks was used as the inspirational material for the next stage of the project.

Using the needs and opportunities uncovered from the Service Safaris, the staff rapidly generated over 140 ideas on how to improve the BALTIC visitor offer. These sketched ideas ranged from small detailed changes in the existing customer experience to large scale ambitious projects for the future.

Throughout the project, a blog was used to record and archive the workshop outputs, including service safaris, sketches and prototype findings. This password protected web space was used during and after the project by both live|work and BALTIC staff.

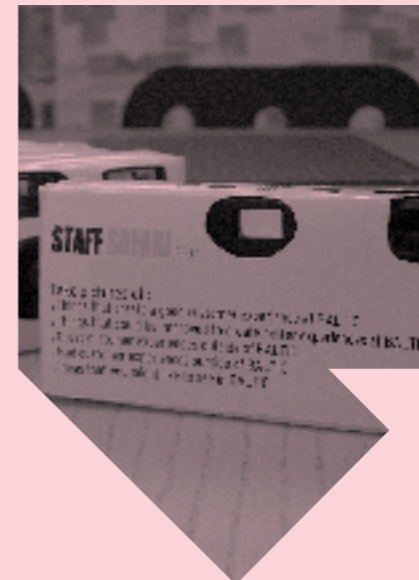
Having voted on which concepts to take forward, the staff created rough prototypes of their ideas (including the use of cardboard and sticky backed plastic) to test on the public and other BALTIC staff in real time during gallery opening hours and quickly

assess their viability and success. Each group recorded the impact and findings from their prototyping session, which in turn enabled them to plan the next prototype iteration and potential for implementation across BALTIC. The staff successfully prototyped four service propositions and are currently planning the next stage of development. In order to sustain the use of service design in improving the customer experience, live|work introduced an Ideas Wall to help all staff members track the development of existing and new service ideas they may have. And enable them to make their idea's progress visible to all BALTIC employees.

The response from staff has been integral to a real shift in culture in the organisation, and the collective impact of even the smallest ideas has made a significant difference to the visitor experience.

"It's amazing how many great ideas we've all come up with that I personally feel will set a precedent and make BALTIC the envy of other arts organisations! It's also made me re-evaluate my role as a consumer of services in my day-to-day life. When you give or receive praise it's brilliant, but you can also see reasonable criticism as being even more valuable, a chance to improve; in most cases criticism happens because people care, not because they want to be difficult." Staff Member, BALTIC

Note: This case study was kindly provided by live|work www.livework.co.uk



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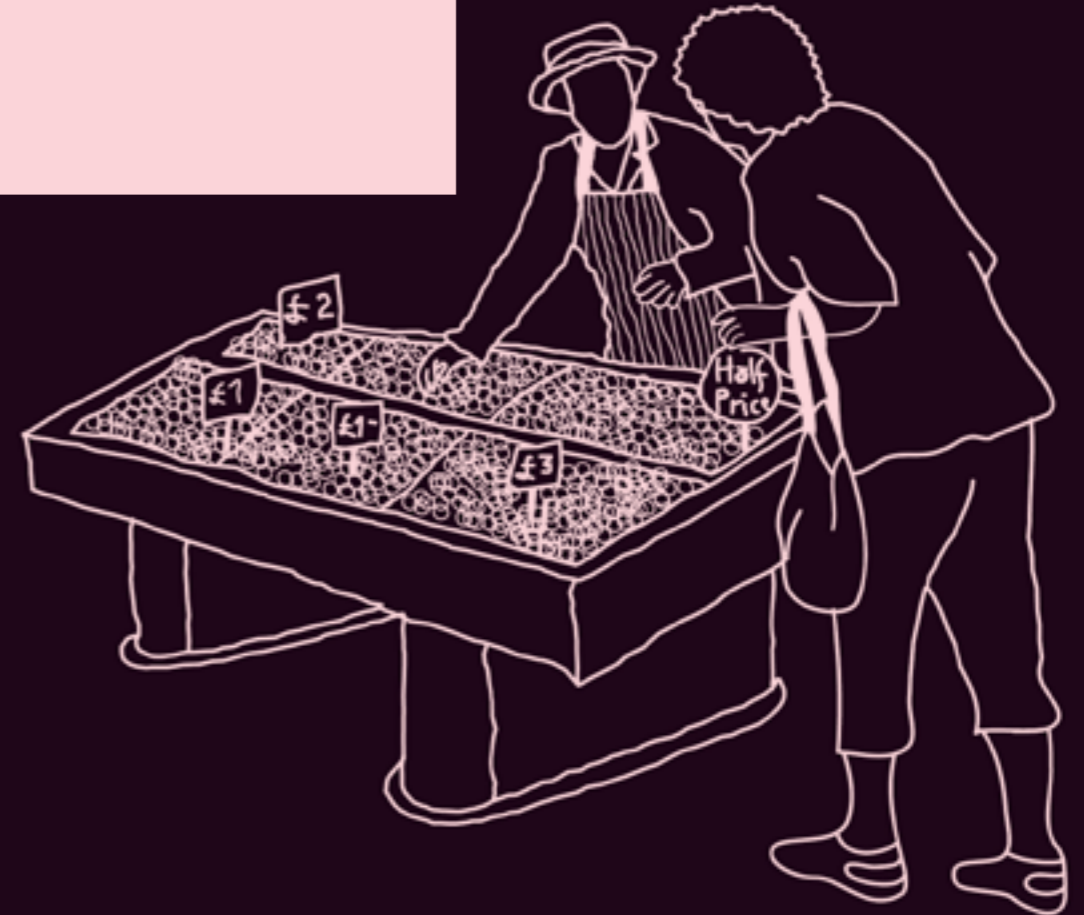
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To show how a company might start to reflect upon the design of the services they offer, we asked specialist service design company **Engine** to describe their approach. The full document is available from the 'Resources' section of the **Design Wales** website but here **Basheera Khan** highlights some of the key messages.

In this age of commoditised products and services, where the customer experience begins long before a sale is made and competition is no longer about price alone, companies are under increasing pressure to provide memorable, personalised, customer-focused services. To differentiate themselves from their competitors, companies need to recognise themselves as service providers and strive to make what they do more useful, usable and desirable for their customers.

Today 89% of SMEs in Europe operate in some form of service industry. Twenty million people in the UK work in service organisations. The service economy now accounts for 72% of the UK's gross domestic product, according to the Office for National Statistics. The WP Carey School of Business has found that in the USA and France, services comprise 80% and 71% of the GDP, respectively. The importance of services to the economy will continue to grow, especially in industrialised countries. The added value created by services can be far greater than that of products. As a simple example, when coffee beans are sold as an unprocessed commodity they have little value unless sold in bulk. If those beans are roasted and packaged the added value, potential price and opportunity for differentiation is much greater. Several steps beyond this would be to offer a freshly brewed cup of coffee, at which point the opportunities to add value through service become even greater. Companies such as Starbucks take this even further by employing experienced baristas to serve a wide range of drinks (but still focused on coffee) in a comfortable environment. They are no longer simply offering a cup of coffee, but a consistent experience to be shared with friends that will encourage customer loyalty, allow differentiation from the competition and increase profit.

The five fundamentals of good service



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◀ **Like products, services can also be designed**

Service design is a very powerful tool. A key element of undertaking the design of a service requires an analysis of all the points of contact between the customer and the service provider. These are usually called 'touch points', and include the brand, customer-facing staff, environments, sales and communications materials and channels.

For this reason, design for service is a very practical approach to implementing a wider, design-led business strategy. Small businesses can use design as a creative and accessible form of business planning to align their strategy, brand and communications around propositions that enhance customers' experiences. Businesses can use design holistically to identify where, when and how a service can be improved and made more valuable to those who provide and receive it. We live in the service century, where even something as small as going to the grocer's can either be a trial or a pleasant experience that adds to the overall happiness of one's day, and happy customers are more likely to return.

Everyone is a service provider

The distinction between products and services continues to blur, and as such good customer service is becoming a key differentiator for any type of company. It is the whole experience, before, during and after the sale that really counts. Customers are willing to pay a premium for products and services that help make their lives easier, more enjoyable and exciting. Established companies such as Apple and IBM are developing services for their customers, realising that their products act as gateways or enablers of these services. The classic example is Apple and the integration between the iPod and iTunes. IBM is also no longer positioning itself as a hardware manufacturer, but rather as a service provider by offering full IT solutions for its clients.

Because every organisation, like it or not, is a service provider, staff need to realise that they are service providers too. The telecoms engineer who goes up the mast to make sure that everything is working properly has just as much influence on the service experience as the courier whose manners and behaviour affect a customer's experience. The main implication of those differences is that services, as opposed to products, rely on the interactions between the customers and providers of the service. ▾



The complete "Design for Service" document is available for download from 'Resources' found on the main menu of the Design Wales website www.designwales.org

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If you would like to find a designer to help you with your ideas you can search **Design Directory Wales** which lists designers in all disciplines based in Wales:
www.designdirectorywales.org
You can also contact **Design Wales** who can help you identify the right designer for your project. **enquiries@designwales.org**

Service Design

The full version of the Service Design publication produced by Design Wales is available to download from the 'Resources' section at **www.designwales.org**

Design Council: Service Design by Bill Hollins
<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/en/About-Design/Design-Disciplines/Service-design-by-Bill-Hollins/>

Service Design Network
<http://www.service-design-network.org>

Design Innovation Education Centre (DIEC) – Centre for Service Design
<http://diec.onene2dev.raki.enigmainteractive.net/page/index.cfm>

Service Design Conference, Copenhagen 2008
<http://www.ciid.dk/symposium/sds/>

International Service Design event, Northumbria 2006
<http://www.cfd.co.uk/isdn/>

Copenhagen Institute of Interaction Design
<http://www.ciid.dk/>

Designing for Services: research into service design in science and technology-based enterprises
<http://www.designingforservices.typepad.co.uk/>

Summary of last 30 years of Service Design literature
<http://www.howardesign.com/exp/service/>

Succeeding through Service Innovation, Cambridge 2007
<http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/ssme/>

Service by Design programme, Birmingham City University
<http://www.servicebydesign.uce.ac.uk/>

Blog: Jeff Howard – Design for Service
<http://designforservice.wordpress.com/>

Blog: Experientia Service Design blog
<http://www.experientia.com/blog/category/service-design/>

Podcast: Emergence conference 2007
<http://www.design.cmu.edu/emergence/2007/>

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Design Wales was established with the aim of helping business realise the direct benefits that design offers and to point the way to a more sustainable Welsh economy. Wales' experience of the growing impact of globalisation over the past twenty years or so has made it obvious that attempting to compete on price alone is not a viable, long-term option for Welsh business.

The only real alternative to the challenges faced by business today is to add value to new products and services through the application of knowledge and innovation. Achieving success requires design to transform business plans into marketable products and services.

There is now a significant body of evidence testifying to the fact that good design results in real benefits for business. It has been established that a business that increases its investment in design is more than twice as likely to see its turnover grow as a business that doesn't.

Part of encouraging business to commit to design entails making it clear that while design is concerned with how a product functions, looks and is promoted there is more to it. For design to play a role in achieving a sustainable advantage over the long term it needs to become an integral part of the management and culture of a company.

Particularly in smaller companies adopting a design-led approach can be a catalyst for real change. You simply can't undertake effective design without market intelligence, user insight, some level of formal process and investment; all of which takes commitment from the top and should touch every corner of the business. Businesses that adopt design as a key part of their operations and strategy will find that it can transform the culture of the organisation to one that is pro-active, outward-looking and confident.

Design Wales have design specialists with the knowledge and experience to help resolve specific technical issues or develop a longer term approach to new product/service development. The current advisory team includes those with experience in product, fashion, textiles, graphics, branding, web, packaging and eco-design.

Resolving technical issues and supporting specific projects.

Design Wales can provide technical advice on issues such as sourcing materials, manufacturing techniques, understanding regulations and environmental best practice. For specific projects we can advise on how to manage the design process, define your project needs via a good briefing document, help select appropriate external design expertise or develop an in-house capability.

Design and business over the long term.

A key goal of Design Wales is to encourage and facilitate more Welsh companies into adopting design over the long term – looking ahead beyond an immediate project and making design an integrated part of future business planning and product development. For most small and medium sized businesses the management of design is relatively simple in relation to the potential benefits, but like good design it doesn't happen by accident.

Design Wales can work with you to discuss how design might benefit your business overall, review how you currently manage individual projects and advise how design can become an integral part of your operations and culture.

Free evaluation and support.

Whether for specific issues or a more general discussion, the specialists within Design Wales can provide you with the support that will help your business realise its full potential

Telephone **0845 3031400** or
e-mail enquiries@designwales.org
www.designwales.org

In the last five years Design Wales has made 4,700 specialist advisory visits to industry and undertaken over 60 large scale events and workshops.

In addition to assisting Welsh industry Design Wales undertakes specific support and activities for the creative industries, the education sector and leads both UK and European networks on design support and promotion.

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10th September 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Reinforcing your brand
with new media”
Taste of Enterprise,
Merthyr

16th September 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Centre for Business, Newport

25th September 2008,
1–3pm

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Reinforcing your brand
with new media”
Cardiff (Welsh Music Foundation)

26th September 2008,
1–3pm

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Food Technology Centre, Ceredigion

30th September 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Chapter, Cardiff

/October

1st October 2008,
9.30am–1pm

Trend Style & Colour Seminar

Venue Cymru, Llandudno

7th October 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Reinforcing your brand
with new media”
Tredegar

8th October 2008,
10.30am–4.30pm

Trend Style and Colour Seminar

The Vale Hotel Golf and Spa Resort,
Hensol

9th October 2008,
10am–1pm

Student Design Event

Odeon, Swansea

13th October 2008,
10am–3.30pm

International Workshop for Design Support (IWDS 2008)

St David's Hotel, Cardiff

13th October 2008,
5pm–6.30pm

Success from Design – DME

European Showcase (in
partnership with DME Design
Management Europe Award)
Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff

14th October 2008,
10am–3.30pm

New Product & Service Design Development

St David's Hotel, Cardiff

14th October 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Centre for Business, Newport

15th October 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Llandudno

17th October 2008,
5pm–7pm

Winning without Pitching – Blair Enns

Techniquet, Cardiff

21st October 2008

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Southeast Wales
(date and venue tbc)

/November

10th November 2008

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Southeast Wales
(date and venue tbc)

11th November 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Chapter, Cardiff

25th November 2008,
1–3pm

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Food Technology Centre, Ceredigion

/December

2nd December 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Chapter, Cardiff

9th December 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Centre for Business, Newport

11th December 2008,
1–3pm

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Techniquet, Wrexham

/January

13th January 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Chapter, Cardiff

21st January 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Galeri Caernafon, Caernafon

27th January 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Reinforcing your brand
with new media”
Southeast Wales
(date and venue tbc)

/February

10th February 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Chapter, Cardiff

26th February 2008,
10am–12noon

Brand Essentials Workshop

“Introduction to Branding”
Merthyr Tydfil

Spaces for all the above events
are limited and require registration
in advance.

Please note that dates and venues
maybe changed without notice.
To avoid inconvenience, please
contact Design Wales to confirm
the above events will take place
as scheduled.

For further information, please
contact enquiries@designwales.org
or visit www.designwales.org

To register for **Brand Essentials
Workshop**, please contact
Victoria Jones **0845 303 1400/**
vjones@designwales.org

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Design Wales forthcoming events

