

Designed for success

UK design consultant Quadro Design Associates has joined forces with Chinese manufacturer Jadason to develop the next generation of digital on-demand printing presses

One might describe industrial design as the softer side of technological development. Whilst engineers design the nuts and bolts that make a machine work, industrial designers concentrate more on the connection between the product and the user, making a product more user friendly and aesthetically pleasing, and therefore more competitive.

UK product design consultants Quadro Design Associates have been helping businesses to use design as a strategic business tool since 1998. Based near Cambridge in the UK, Quadro also has associate offices in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, and has developed a deep understanding of the region's issues and its market place.



Fast facts

Company: Quadro Design Associates

Country: UK

Industry: Creative & Media

Website: www.quadro-consult.com

“China has undergone massive change in recent years,” says Professor Phil Gray, founder of Quadro. “The market has really opened up, and people are beginning to get excited about industrial design.”

Opportunity knocks

In July 2007, Quadro was invited to present an overview of its design skills and experience to Chinese company Jadason Enterprises Limited, a manufacturer and turn key solution provider of graphic arts and digital media products.

By the end of the presentation, it was clear that there was an opportunity for Quadro to help Jadason with a major project it had been developing – an on-demand digital printing press which can instantly print brochures, cards and posters, personalising each page if required.

“Jadason had a good mechanical and electronic design, but they

had been thinking about it only from the point of view of functionality,” says Gray. “By looking at it from an operational perspective, we were able to help them to transform it into a significantly better product, with a caché to attack the global market.”

Making an impact

Initially the product had been intended primarily for the Chinese market, but this changed when Quadro came on board. The designers started the project with a design audit which analysed operations, use and serviceability. This allowed them to come up with three alternative concepts which they presented to the Jadason management team, each with an exciting value proposition.

“Within four weeks of starting our project for Jadason, we had made an impact,” says Gray. “It is important to think of design as not only the physical appearance but as a series of thought processes.

“ The market has really opened up, and people are beginning to get excited about industrial design”

For example, based on findings from the audit, we introduced a formal working environment creating a workplace for the operator and incorporating a wire management system into the workstation.

This helped to make the operating environment tidier and safer, ultimately enhancing the user experience. It has also given the product a personality.”

Detailed design has now started and the first prototypes will be tested early in 2008 in preparation for a product launch at DRUPA, the world’s largest print and media

exhibition and congress held in Düsseldorf, Germany.

“We had a special challenge, as this next generation product will be competing in a market place with some major global brands like Hewlett Packard, Xerox and Kodak,” says Gray. “But, we believe that the product will make the grade. And our project with Jadason just goes to show that it is both possible and desirable to work in multi-disciplinary and multi-national teams to achieve high quality design for products that will be marketed globally.”

“It is both possible and desirable to work in multidisciplinary and multi-national teams to achieve high quality design”



Promoting UK Design

Given the company’s experience in China, it was recently invited to become a member of the UK Design Task Force, an initiative set up by UK Trade & Investment to give support to British businesses wanting to penetrate the Chinese market.

“It’s a privilege to have been selected to join the UK Design Task Force,” says Gray. “It gives us the opportunity to share our experience of working in the south of China for the last nine years. There’s a real thirst for learning and increasing demand for design services, and we hope to help UK businesses to be a part of this.”

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Design Task Force

The China Design Task Force was formed specifically to support British businesses invest in the challenging and exciting Chinese market.

The taskforce represents the very best of British design companies that have significant international experience, and aims to attract Chinese buyers, intermediaries, public sector and press to consider UK expertise in their procurement.

The following twelve companies were successful in the first stage of the taskforce: Alloy, CGI Consulting, Conran & Partners, Creactive Design, Dalziel & Pow, Design Bridge, Geoff Howe Marketing Communications, Industrial Design Consulting, Loewy, Quadro Design Associates, Smallfry and Tangerine.

Get in touch

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