

I Screamed, You Screamed, We All Screamed for Redesign!

In a store unification project that will go global, Ben & Jerry's had to cream Cold Stone Creamery and out-pizzazz Häagen-Dazs in terms of design.

By Becky Ebenkamp bebenkamp@brandweek.com

DESIGN

The problem: Whether a person's palate leans more toward Cherry Garcia or Stephen Colbert's Americone Dream, Ben & Jerry's gets the majority of its sales from prepackaged pints sold at stores. Not that its parlors are a drip in the bucket. With 500 stores—250 in the U.S.—the Unilever brand with the Yasgur's-farm-raised, do-good hippie vibe needed to revisit its roots so its cones wouldn't get short shrift. But with some thrift. "We're a franchise system ... we're spending other people's money, so we have to be cost conscious," said Ellen Kresky, Ben & Jerry's creative director. "[As] a design person, I'm not not always a pragmatist, so this forced me to look at the operational challenges."

The solution: "The mission is to create one brand voice," said Tre Musco, CEO/chief creative officer at Tesser, a San Francisco brand design firm that specializes in restaurant revamps. (KFC, Quiznos and Häagen-Dazs are clients.) "The brand voice for the packaged goods was very tight, but the stores' [voice] wasn't as well managed [because] managers around the world were looking after their version of the brand." Shops also needed to be eye candy for mall developers mulling a potential parlor partner.

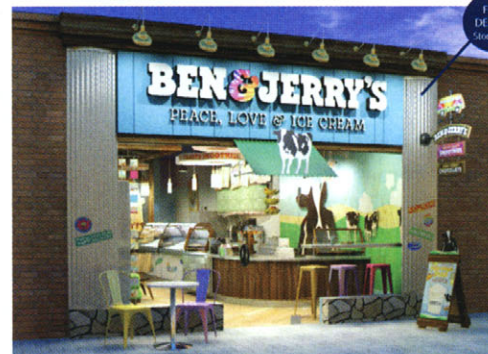
How was it created: Musco's team embarked on a brand exploration that involved traveling to exotic store locations, meeting with franchisees, conducting consumer research and, oh, tasting ice cream. Basically, the redesign boiled down to simplifying. Stores were visually loud and all over the style spectrum. The brand's hues were narrowed down to sky blue, white and grass green—the wall swatches of new wave neon were swapped for earthier tones. Cow cutouts and fun fixtures helped create a rustic meets funky feel. The ampersand in the logo was given a touch of tie-dye. Musco said they designed with young adults in mind as they spend more time in stores and relate to the brand's message more than families with kids do. There's low lounge seating, sofa settees allow laptop access and larger stores have a community table. "The first time I walked into to one, I saw eight girls sitting around drinking smoothies and texting each other," he said, laughing. Sounds like he's doing something right.



Original DESIGN

BEFORE

Duran Duran dined here: The old stores were fun and friendly, we'll give them that. But colors clashed and vied for attention with the ice cream. Plus, the eye-bleeding atmosphere didn't exactly scream, 'Ice cream, social.'



Final DESIGN Storefront



Final DESIGN Concept



THE FINAL DESIGN

THE FINAL DESIGN

Streamlined, Ben & Jerry's style: A flagship store (left) incorporates natural materials to create the unified funky farm vibe that's rolling out to new stores. To stay true to Ben & Jerry's brand positioning, Tesser sought out repurposed materials for quirky fixtures, such as the milk crate and bottle light fixture/chandelier, the VW bus plasma screen and the 'beaded curtain' made of ice cream pint lids. By seeking out and using such things as post-recycled plastic, environmentally safe glue and replenishable wood species, the project jibes with the company's social mission. The next challenge? Scaling costs back in order to remodel all 500 stores.

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