Wilding Wallpaper - art meets design

Facts at a glance

Challenge

To market the unique service offering provided by Wilding Wallpaper Design and Production to multiple target audiences.

Type of designer engaged

Graphic Designer / Design Manager

Most important part of the process

Keeping the project focused and the design themes unified.

Most difficult part of the process

To explain a multifaceted business in a way that was easily understood.

All aspects of the screen-printing process are handled on-site

Solution

A new name, unique brand mark and website were designed to market the business.

Outcomes

Hand-printed stationary and brochure with high artistic content and a website that effectively communicates Wilding Wallpaper to the target audience were produced.

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Company background	Designer background
Wilding Wallpaper Design and Production www.wilding.net.au	Ziegler Design www.zieglerdesign.net
Industry sector: Wallpaper design and manufacture	Type: Graphic design
Project lead: William Wilding	Project lead: Caitlin Ziegler

Background to the project

William Wilding, and his wife Esther Wilding, returned to Australia at the end of 2005 from Germany where they had lived since 1999. The couple had committed to participate in the re-development of his family's business, Paperhangings, which had been founded by Wilding's parents in the 1980s. The business had grown out of a property restoration firm that had made a niche for itself reproducing period wallpapers. The family had however closed its wallpaper making factory in the mid 1990s, and begun importing the wallpaper basepaper pre-coloured, and outsourced design to a freelance designer. The final manufacture of the heritage designs had been carried out by a screenprinting business which, by the end of 2005, had moved away from making wallpaper. In order to found Wilding Wallpaper Design and Production Wilding would first have to modernise procedures of design and production.

Recreation of The Victorian Wallpaper Supply Chain

The Australian wallpaper industry had for all intents and purposes disappeared from the tertiary

Ziegler and Wilding are working on a book that examines the use of pattern and colour in decoration and design.

sector and manufacturing landscape. The industry had moved away from the analogue era into the digital age and by the end of 2005, firms importing mass-produced wallpapers were exclusively servicing modern wallpaper demand. While Wilding could see there was a market for specialised wallpaper knowledge in both the design and manufacturing sectors, he understood he would be unable to grow that market and reach it alone, so he looked around for the right people in the government, education, business and creative communities to assist his company to make the change.

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Regional Development (DIIRD) referred Wilding to Design Victoria. Having provided vital direction to Wilding during 'The Supply Chain Project', DIIRD knew Design Victoria could provide much needed design assistance to the company's marketing plans. Design Victoria assessed the type of designer required for the project and after further discussions, provided the business with facilitation and funding support to work with Ziegler Design.

Part of the challenge Caitlin Ziegler faced was the public perception of wallpaper as dreary and outdated. Ziegler needed to create wallpaper designs that would be perceived as stylish — fit to grace the walls of the world's finest public buildings and private homes.

Ziegler also knew from experience that developing quality wallpaper requires effective collaboration and effective communication between the designer and the manufacturer. Conscious of the work that had gone into the recreation of 'The Victorian Wallpaper Supply Chain' she applied herself to the task of developing a branding strategy that would speak to designers.
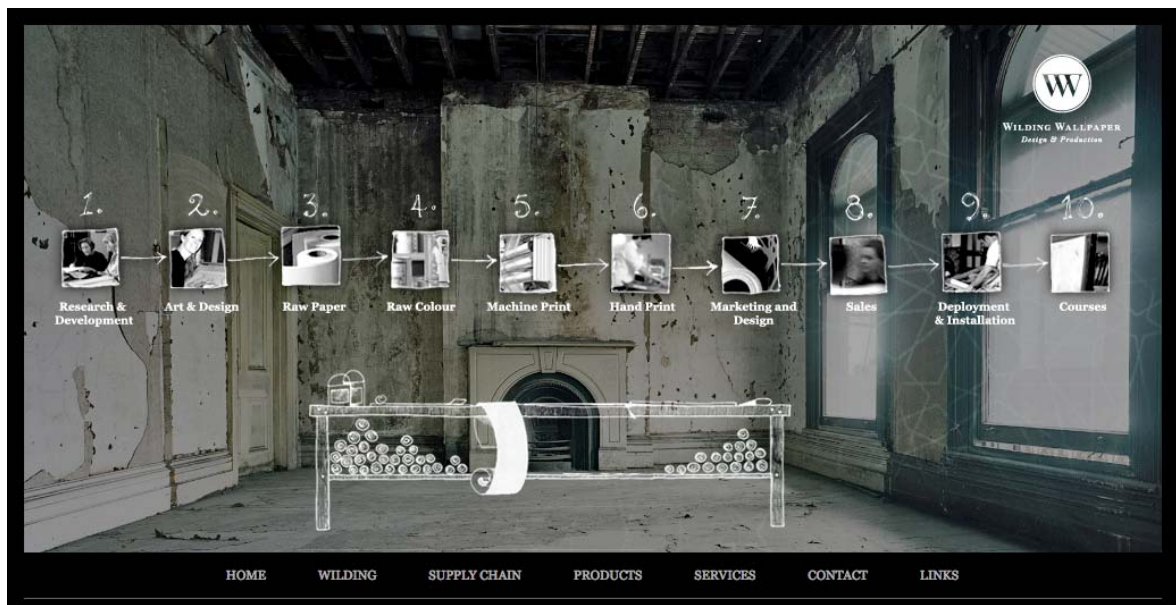
Above: Wilding Wallpaper Design and Production's supply chain as illustrated on www.wilding.net.au/supply-chain

Role of the facilitator

Gary Haywood, Design Victoria, acted as facilitator for the Business Immersion. While his role usually involves introducing businesses to the benefits of design, in this case Haywood coached Wilding more so on how to optimise it. This, Wilding understood, would translate into an improved brand identity and image with which to increase the company's exposure, and thereafter sales, to lift productivity and returns on capital investment.

Response – a one year design process

Defining the business

Ziegler had previously worked with Wilding, providing illustration skills to reproduce complex Victorian wallpapers. The existing relationship left Wilding comfortable to place the presentation of his business in her hands.

Ziegler's first challenge was to define the nature of the business. As the business used screen-printing to apply the final layer of wallpaper there were plenty of interesting possibilities for expansion – textiles, stationary and other printed design. Although Wilding was tempted to pursue these, Ziegler reasoned that to market the business effectively it would have to focus on one product initially. The logical choice was wallpaper.

The name of the business 'Heartsing' expressed Wilding's desire to produce and distribute inspired works of art and design, however Ziegler felt there was room for improvement; "Heartsing just didn't say enough about what the company did. Names that are too vague have to be very strong brands to carry that off".

Zielger proposed a name change that incorporated 'Wilding' to emphasise the family nature of the business, it had a strong English sound, and it reflected the bespoke nature of the brand. William agreed to the change. He was further content with what 'Wilding' symbolised – that is the process of a wild apple tree growing from seed to become a tree that bears fruit, which falls to the ground, from which another wild apple tree grow. Wilding wanted this cyclical feel expressed in the brand. It also squared nicely with the idea of participating in each link of the supply chain.

Defining the audience

Ziegler started out defining Wilding Wallpaper Design and Production's target audience into two main categories – customer and business-to-business. Customers were considered consumers that could buy Wilding Wallpaper direct from the company; the business audience comprised of architects, interior designers, textile designers and graphic designers who could work with Wilding to produce customised wallpaper for clients for one-off projects and on-going collections.

The notion of design flowing in both directions was unusual and one of the most difficult concepts to pin down, says Ziegler. It also meant that collateral developed would have to address two quite distinct audiences.

Design concepts

Ziegler worked with William's wife Esther, also a graphic designer, to develop the brand identity and collateral.

"William is very proud of what his parents achieved and he wanted to build on that but Paperhangings is their work and he wanted to create something of his own," said Esther.

Mindful of potentially confusing the Wilding Wallpaper Design and Production and Paperhangings messages in the market place, Ziegler used colours to maintain the link, separating them through conceptual work.

After discarding some secondary concepts for the logo, a design consisting of the initials WW within a circle began to develop. A classic serif font was selected and the two W's were merged, creating a 3 lying on its side, and set within a double circle. The logo has the appearance of a stamp, as if hand made, like Wilding Wallpaper.

Ziegler developed a colour palette that considered both the classic and contemporary aspects of the business. She chose blue as it featured heavily in Paperhangings's brand, and black and cream followed as natural complements. These were supplemented with a series of less demure colours to inject a contemporary feel, while maintaining elegant simplicity.

Wilding Wallpaper

Logo – mono and reversed.
If it is appropriate to publish the mark in colour, colour should be limited to a single swatch of the palette following.
May appear on any background; mark may be separated from type.
Type when used must be legible, no smaller than 6pt.
Clear space requirements are outlined below.

Logo designed by Ziegler to reflect the essence of Wilding.

Managing the design process

The project quickly became a collaborative exercise as more and more professionals were involved at varying levels. Both Wilding and Zielger drew on their networks involve various professionals; an art director, a copywriter, three photographers, two graphic designers, a web designer and a screen printer, with many others contributing along the way. Ziegler managed the various professionals to ensure the design elements came together and the project stayed on course.

Ziegler took inspiration from the enthusiasm generated by her colleagues.

"That's how we knew we were on track because the momentum kept on building, with people wanting to be involved. Given that designers make up part of the target audience, we knew we were hitting the right target," she said.

Photography was done at Wilding's factory and two Victorian houses that Wilding was overseeing the restoration of. Adhering to the palette designed for the brand, the photographers shot some images at dawn to create a series of haunting images, onto which Esther Wilding superimposed panels of the art-wallpapers to appear as if they were peeling off the walls

A Victorian house that Wilding oversaw the restoration of.

Results

The home page on the Wilding Wallpaper Design and Production website.

The final website and brochure developed make great use of the images to communicate Wilding Wallpaper's service offering visually.

The brochure was designed as a set of leaf pages with photography on one side and the other side left blank. This design was developed as such so that content could be customised and screen-printed in short runs as small as 50 to target very specific audiences. This approach is also cost effective for a small business, such as Wilding's.

The stationery functions equally as promotional material and wallpaper samples. Printed on high quality paper, Ziegler hopes the brochure will be seen as an object to be admired rather than simply a leaflet to be discarded or filed away and forgotten.

With so many inputs, a large part of Ziegler's job was to maintain consistency and ensure the collateral retained its simplicity and its unity.

"We had a lot of people in the melting pot but the aesthetic outcome couldn't look haphazard. It had to look cohesive, which I think we achieved," she said. "Once we got through the initial stage of narrowing down what it was that was needed, everything came together quite seamlessly."

Ziegler and Wilding believe the collaborative nature of the project is a selling point in itself. As Wilding's business model is built around successful collaboration between designers and manufacturers, the branding itself functions as a successful example of this process.

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The site was constructed using a content management system to allow Wilding Wallpaper Design and Production complete control – the company can change the design of the site any time. Although this level of flexibility required extra work on behalf of the web designer, it gives Wilding the freedom to expand the business into other areas in future.

"Although Wilding Wallpaper looks like a manufacturing business, it actually belongs to the service sector. And good service requires an open mind," says Wilding.

In 2007 Wilding Wallpaper entered into discussions with the School of Creative Art at the University of Southern Queensland that would eventually develop into 'The Wallpaper Project', which was launched in Brisbane in 2009. The project, supported by Design Victoria, demonstrated how the art and design sectors can work with business to open up new markets.

"The creative community is trained to develop ideas. The incorporation of rigorous creativity into business planning makes it possible to develop the boundaries of existing markets and shape those yet to come," said Wilding.

The touring exhibition of wallpaper designs, co-curated by Wilding and Simon Mee, hints at how this can be done.
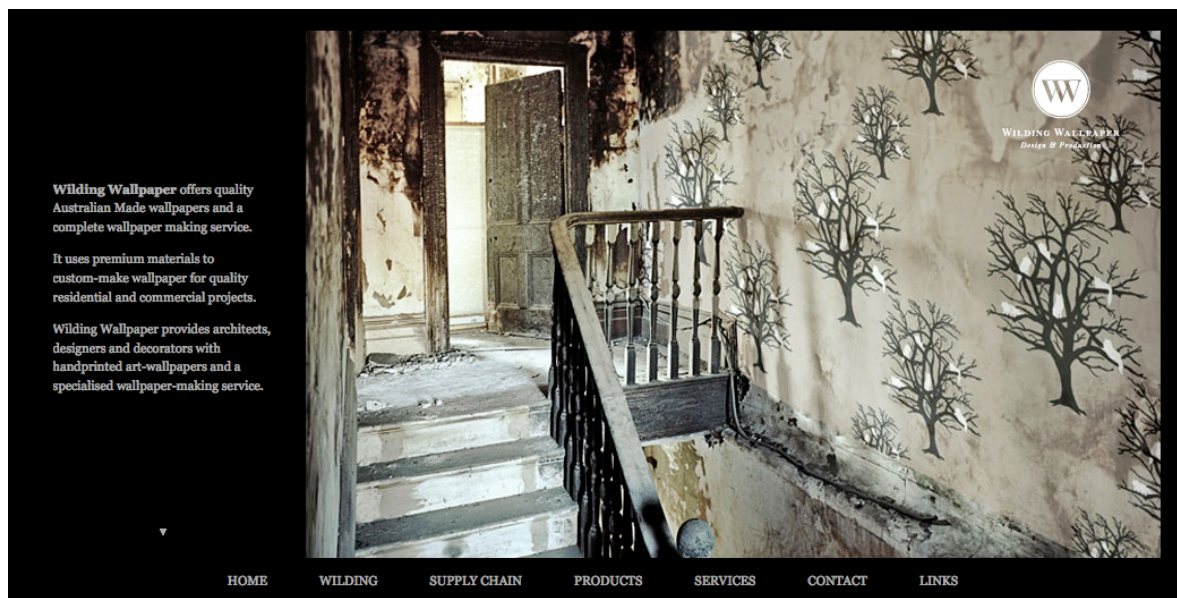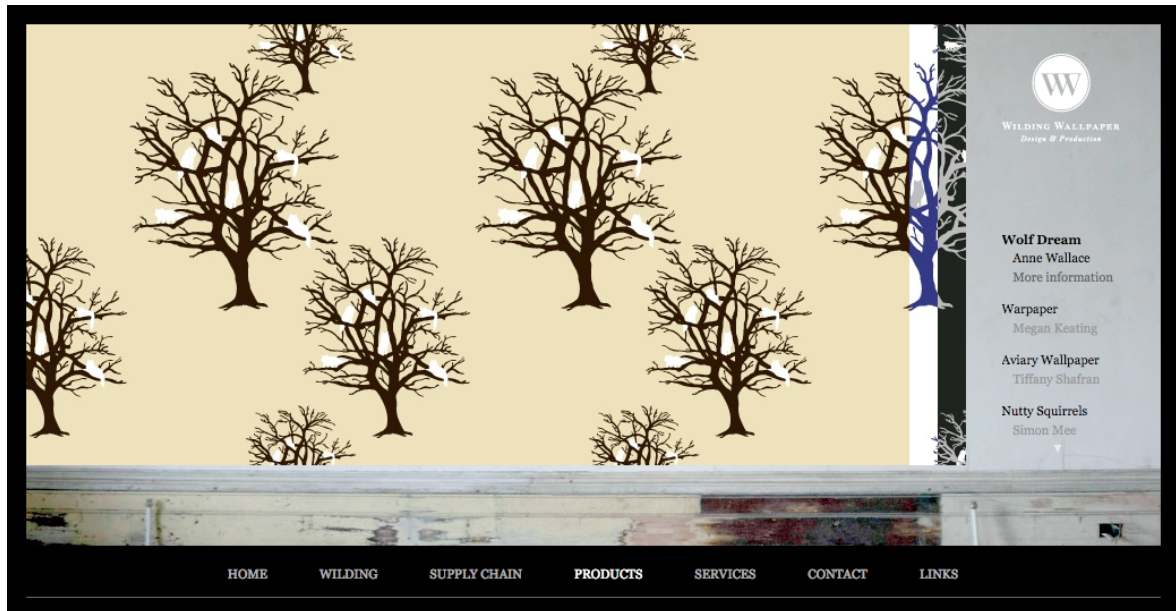

Above: About Us page www.wilding.net.au/wilding   Below: Case Studies www.wilding.net.au/services/case-study

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Above: Wilding Wallpaper Design and Production products page www.wilding.net.au/wallpaper/modern

Contact Wilding Wallpaper Design and Production www.wilding.net.au/contact

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