

A vintage year

DCA, one of Europe's leading product development consultancies, has experienced another twelve months of growth and success

Now entering its sixth decade, DCA enjoyed a year of continued growth through 2012. The company grew in its overall scale as well as in its depth and breadth of expertise across multiple disciplines in product design and development and the business categories in which it works. Whilst the business is developing its provision in new areas, its commitment to certain core sectors, especially medical device design, remains very strong.

"Since the early sixties DCA has helped clients to design and develop market-leading products," says Rob Woolston, DCA's managing director. "The scope and impact of our work continues to develop, now across an international stage. Two mainstays of our success are the long-standing relationships that we have developed with leading companies and the strength of the skill base within the fantastic team we have built."

Over the last decade DCA's work has become more international in outlook. Much of the company's growth has come from exporting expertise in product innovation to multinational corporations. The success of DCA's international approach has been recognised in the granting of the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade. "We are deeply honoured to be recognised in this manner," adds Woolston. "It is fitting to thank all of our staff and clients for making our success in international trade possible."

DCA has had a number of high-level project wins over the last year. The company

has been selected as Hitachi Rail Europe's design partner and is responsible for the interior design of the Super Express trains that form a key part of the DfT's Intercity Express Programme (IEP).

Through this programme Hitachi Rail Europe will supply a fleet of 92 electric and bi-mode trains for the Great Western and East Coast Main Lines (that's 596 carriages in total). DCA's work on the interior design, which will be completed during the second half of 2013, includes the construction of a full size mock-up at its Warwick workshops to demonstrate the interior design solution to all the relevant project stakeholders.

Rob Bassil, DCA's transport director, says: "We are delighted that Hitachi has chosen DCA to provide the interior design solution for IEP. We are very excited to be involved in what is one of the biggest and most significant contracts ever placed in the UK rail industry. The new trains will offer British passengers a step change in reliability, capacity and comfort."

Furthermore, DCA's FMCG business expanded with a series of launches in the consumer healthcare, household and nutritional subcategories.

DCA helped Reckitt Benckiser create and launch Veet's highly successful Easywax product and Air Wick's Filter & Fresh product, the only air care product in the market that breathes in odours and breathes out fresh fragranced air.

For GSK, DCA created two structural packaging projects in partnership with GSK's



nutritional design team: the new Ribena Plus bottle, which went on sale in the UK at the end of February, and a Lucozade bottle for the Vodafone McLaren Mercedes F1 drivers.

In 2012 DCA's commercial and industrial team has recently helped Chubb create the new FX range of fire extinguishers by developing a series of intuitive features focussed on the needs of the users. The new handle and lever have been carefully designed and refined using ergonomic insights to ensure optimum grip and comfort in use. The traditional release pin that prevents discharge has been replaced with a new easy-pull moulded clip.

The company's interaction design department also continues to mature. 2012 saw a number of launches including the multi-touch interface for Guidance's CyScan ship positioning system. "Due to our strengths



in industrial design, usability, electronics and software, a lot of clients from medical to consumer and commercial have been asking us to develop products where digital meets the physical," explains DCA director Nick Mival. "A lot of this work is strategic or long term so during the year we decided to produce a short internal example of the

kind of work we are involved in but can't show. PARKd will be launched in early 2103 and shows an alternative vision to a product experience that irritates a number of us, the parking meter."

Finally, 2012 saw DCA restructure its research offer, which is now to be led by Charles Drury and Dr Dan Jenkins. The new

structure adds breadth and depth to DCA's existing research offer in order to meet the growing needs of clients from product and portfolio planning to evaluation and testing.

Dr Dan Jenkins explains further: "Some projects require a quantitative business case to be made. Likewise, some stakeholders engage with hard facts more positively than stories, often reporting that they are 'ruled by the head rather than the heart'. The first stage of quantifying change is defining what to measure. These metrics will be project dependent; however, they typically include measures of efficiency, safety, reliability, and usability."



www.dca-design.com