

Top of the class

Design consultancy **DCA** continues to attract the highest levels of recognition across a wide range of sectors

In another award-winning year, the Warwick-based product design and development consultancy DCA has demonstrated its insight and expertise across an impressively broad range of sectors. From FMCG packaging to large-scale transport projects, whether working in the consumer, medical or industrial market, DCA offers the highest level of service to globally significant clients.

In 2015 DCA continued to excel in the medical sector. DCA and Sanofi won a Chicago Athenaeum Good Design Award for the Toujeo® SoloStar® insulin pen injector and Elekta announced plans for the 2017 commercial release of Atlantic, a high-field MRI-guided radiation therapy system – a project which in 2012, as part of a wider engagement, saw DCA working with Elekta to create a future vision for the industrial

design and usability of the Atlantic system.

The Elekta project drew on DCA's full service offering. The future vision was informed by a detailed evidence base and grounded with a collaborative technical review. A body of evidence was collected from visits to seven treatment sites worldwide, over 90 hours of observations (approximately 360 treatment sessions) and over 50 in-depth interviews with health care professionals, thought-leaders and system stakeholders. As well as providing a grounded, aspirational vision for the Atlantic system, the broad evidence base and detailed design language has informed the development of a number of other projects within Elekta.

"It was a real pleasure for DCA to work with Elekta's Atlantic project team on such an exciting and game changing development. Throughout



the engagement Elekta clearly demonstrated a commitment to evidence based decision making, placing the needs of the patients and health care professionals firmly at the centre of their vision for the future of radiotherapy, affirming their position as a world leader in their field," explains Rob Woolston, DCA's managing director.

Within the consumer product space the human body was a theme through 2015 with two launched projects relating to feet and two related to teeth.

Working alongside the R&D team at RB Global Design, DCA developed three distinct ranges of insoles for the Scholl brand – sport, everyday, and work – that feature 'GelActiv' technology to provide the wearer with the correct balance of cushioning.

The challenge lay in defining and differentiating each product based on its particular function whilst keeping a consistent look and feel across the range as a whole. The heel detail is a key linking element which communicates comfort, performance and quality across the range. On a visual level, patterns and colour are used to communicate different characteristics of each product. The contour design in the sole is different for each product, echoing the pressure areas of the foot and communicating how the insole functions.

Another Scholl product, the Velvet Smooth electronic foot file, a project that began life in 2013, was recognized in 2015 with a prestigious iF Design Award. Velvet Smooth also won a Good Design Award alongside the Veet® Spawax, again designed



by DCA and the RB Global design team.

There was further awards success with DCA's packaging design for Sensodyne® Mouthwash scooping a Gold Starpack Award, Worldpack Award and Good Design Award. The new structural packaging design improved impact at shelf through a distinctive bottle shape that conveys the brand values of expertise, understated confidence and trust. Additionally, a new co-moulded cap allows easier and more accurate dosing through its new 'easy to see' measure feature. By taking an inclusive approach to its design, the cap is easier to use for everyone, whilst incorporating child resistance in its simple but elegant design.

Meanwhile, product work for another GSK dental brand, this time Aquafresh, took a Good Design Award and a Silver Award at the DBA



Design Effectiveness Awards. The latter award acknowledged DCA's input on a range of Aquafresh® toothbrushes designed especially for children. The range includes brushes, toothpastes, mouthwash and a teether and the design solution explores characterisation to create a more explicit tool for storytelling, engaging children's imagination and helping mothers with the bathroom struggle of oral care. Animal characters linked by a common teeth motif have been created for younger children, with 'bold' and 'cool' designs for older kids.

Moving up in scale, DCA's transport team (along with its client Hitachi Rail Europe) won the 2015 User-Centred Product Design Award from the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society for the interior design at the Class 800/801 train. The design process took into consideration all users of the trains, including drivers, employees and passengers. An extensive consultation process was undertaken throughout the design process which involved numerous passenger groups, representing commuters, cyclists, wheel chair users and visually impaired travellers, to name a few.

"It's a real honour to receive such a prestigious award – the whole design team is thrilled to see their hard work recognized in this way. The overriding philosophy behind the design of the Hitachi Class 800/801 train was multidisciplinary, with human factors playing a critical role from the outset. This allowed us to explore opportunities to improve safety, efficiency, and the user experience from the earliest stages of development," comments DCA technical director Rob Bassil. "Prototyping played a key role, with the design team and project stakeholders using rigs and mock ups throughout to explore and evaluate the

Opposite page, bottom | Fuse, a concept consumer unit, Braun Prize Silver Award

Opposite page, top | Veet® Spawax

Left | Toujeo® SoloStar® insulin pen injector

Below | Sensodyne® mouthwash bottle

compatibility of the interior design with identified passenger and staff activities."

Whilst in the precise work of metrology, DCA has worked with the AMETEK Taylor Hobson team to develop its latest portable surface finish profiler - the new Surtronic Duo. This product consists of separable Measurement Traverse and Display units connected via a wireless Bluetooth link. DCA developed the new electronic hardware to exploit the benefits of a new core microprocessor, colour display and the latest battery technologies, in order to provide improved functionality, usability and extended operation within very challenging unit cost targets.

Finally, DCA was the proud recipient of the silver prize at the 2015 Braun Prize awards for their smart consumer unit, Fuse. The award sought the Extra in the Ordinary from a field of over 2,500 global entries.

Fuse takes a fresh look at domestic consumer unit systems. In awarding the silver prize the Jury commented: "A fuse could be considered a maligned object, something not usually considered a design object, but this idea both elevates its aesthetic value and empowers consumers to make changes in their life, which is the way the world is moving. The combination of hardware and software comes together very well here, to create one user experience. The concept is well thought through, from the easy installation of the unit, to the low energy E-ink display, to the app showing consumers how much energy they consume."

