

Design Business Association Press Release

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DBA welcomes groundbreaking study on the use of design and corporate financial performance

The Design Business Association (DBA) welcomes a new study published today which demonstrates for the first time the direct relationship between the effective use of design and financial performance.

The study, funded by the Design Council, examined UK quoted companies over a ten-year period between 1994 and 2003 and found that a group of 63 companies identified to be effective users of design outperformed the FTSE 100 index over the full period by 200%, and also surpassed their peers in the recent bull and bear markets.*

As the professional body for the UK design industry, the DBA acts as a prime intermediary between design and business to promote effective design as an enhancement to business growth and profitability. The annual DBA Design Effectiveness Awards scheme was one of the selection criteria for the study and therefore a key indicator of commercial success.

Deborah Dawton, CEO, DBA, says: "The DBA welcomes this new study as it represents a clear cut case: design impacts on business performance. Design is not just about the end product or service. And it isn't just about the environment in which the product is sold. Design is about everything you do in business and the way in which you do it; it's the critical link in the business process.

"The only design worth commissioning is that which can prove its effectiveness. I think the challenge to any company today in this climate of increasing accountability is to measure the value of its design investment. Companies must reassess their use of design - throughout the business - or risk losing ground to their competitors who understand the long-term value of effective design."

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The criteria for selection of the companies listed in the study's 'Design Portfolio' included the DBA's Design Effectiveness Awards. They are the only awards that take the commercial success of products and services into account in the judging process.

Dawton continues: "For the past 16 years we have had our finger on the pulse of corporate performance as these Awards case studies have delivered irrefutable evidence that design is not an expense but a vital investment. We are encouraged but not surprised to see that so many of the most design-effective, high-performing businesses listed in this new study are many of the UK's leading brands and past winners of DBA Design Effectiveness Awards. Design is not only a worthwhile investment, it is a critical one. Design can turn business ideas into reality and as demonstrated by this study, can lead to increased profitability in the long-term and shareholder delight.

"The evidence in this study provides a massive confidence boost for the UK design industry. Design consultancies now have independent proof to show their clients the importance of respecting, valuing and investing in effective design. This is the solid, long-term business case the design industry has been waiting for."

- Ends-

To interview Deborah Dawton, CEO, DBA or for further information, case studies and images, please contact:

Katharine Boness, Head of Communications, DBA
T: 020 7251 9229
E: katharine.boness@dba.org.uk

Notes to Editors:

The DBA

The DBA is the professional body for the UK design industry and acts as a primary intermediary between design and business to promote effective design as an enhancement to business growth and profitability. Our mission is to recognise and communicate the contribution that effective design can make to the commercial success of a product or service.

The DBA Design Effectiveness Awards

Established in 1989 (after the DBA was set up in 1986), the DBA's Design Effectiveness Awards showcase the very best of design in business. Judged by senior figures from industry and commerce, the Awards identify and reward the businesses involved in commissioning design that generate the best returns. It is the only awards scheme that takes proven commercial success into consideration in the judging process.

The Design Council*

Copies of the full report are available for download from:

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/performance/corporatefinance.pdf>

For further information on the report please call:

Helen Thompson, Manager, Media Relations, Design Council Press Office
Direct 020 7420 5286
Mobile 07977 544 635

The Design Council's purpose is to inspire and enable the best use of design by the UK, in the world context, to improve prosperity and well-being. It helps people and organisations in business, education, public services and government understand design and use it effectively as part of their strategy.