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# **DBA Design Effectiveness Awards 2021**

**dba**

# Speech transcript

## **Deborah Dawton, DBA Chief Executive**

This time last year, we were novices in the handling of a world pandemic. What we've seen is a myriad of interventions from different governments as they deliberated and decided on what they thought was the best course of action given the context they found themselves in. These decisions would have life and death implications.

Predicting the course of a completely new disease just a few months after it had been first identified is incredibly difficult, and even the experts had to acknowledge the uncertainty and adapt their predictions as more data became available.

Who were those experts? Epidemiologists and statisticians, and even they substantially underestimated the true extent of the pandemic. But they were far more accurate than the non-expert which is why we listened to them.

We too would say that expert opinion is undoubtedly important in informing and advising those making, in the case of the awards today, business decisions. The cases in the DBA Design Effectiveness Awards show where design is able to shape business strategy and implementation.

Most of what designers do doesn't have life and death implications, but it can have very serious implication on the future of a start-up brand, or established business, or charity. The cost of getting design wrong could be fatal for a business. And that in turn has an impact on their employees, and suppliers and customers, the locality in which they sit, exports.

Great expert intuition and judgment in design is a feature of every case study you're going to hear about today. The data that the design experts have been given is what we'd call a brief. It outlines the challenge being faced by the client, and when you hand that to a designer with the right field of expertise, then good judgment follows, and if you select well, great judgment – the sort of judgement that delivers far in excess on the targets that were initially set.

When the government announced its Build Back Better plan for growth, I asked myself, "Where does design fit into this plan?" And the answer is in the Better of those three words. We're going to need every ounce of imagination to design new retail experiences that reawaken our high streets; the government wants our towns and cities to be the engines of growth; we all want to see our communities prosper; we're going to need every ounce of imagination to design products, whose manufacturing processes meet tough new emissions targets; and support the government's commitment to transition to net zero; and we're going to need every ounce of imagination to design world-class services that keep our financial sector, for example, at the forefront of development; supporting the government's vision for Global Britain.

What follows are 28 case studies that highlight how design is driving growth in businesses today. Some of the case studies help with the transition to net zero; some of case studies help firmly establish the global reputation of design to Build Back Better. Some of the case studies have led to job creation. Some of the case studies have led to capital investment in plant and machinery.

The government says that combining new approaches with our well-established strengths, will deliver growth, and today, I'm asking the design industry to embed itself in that strategy. Look to find new purpose in your productivity for others. Turn the power of your collective imagination to the toughest challenges, and two to three years from now, we'll be seeing case studies that don't just up the game for the UK, but up the game for future generations whose livelihoods, whose quality of life depends on us getting this right.

Enjoy this next hour or so. Really listen to the impact that you and your peers are having – it's our collective achievement that makes the creative industries a force to be reckoned with. Congratulation on making the cut today, and enjoy your win. Take time to celebrate. And tell the world what you've achieved.