

ONE LOGO, many faces

3 has evolved into a new kind of brand for a new kind of business

By Keith Kirby

IT'S A DRAGON, a football, a guitar or even a racing car accessory, depending on the mood or the occasion. The 3 brand logo has certainly come a long way since it was launched in 2003.

The original logo was an innovative three dimensional design with a cool titanium outer shell representing key qualities such as reliability and usefulness. The ever-changing animated inside represented all the fun and entertainment that 3G technology has to offer. It was designed to be different, not a name but a number; not flat but 3D; never still, always moving.

Of course it couldn't be animated in all applications such as print, so it was decided to take six snapshots at different stages of the animation, producing six colour versions. The logo was also designed to only appear on white and a keyline version was created for tricky applications where the colour logos couldn't be reproduced.

As the business has developed, the International Brand Group, part of Hutchison Whampoa Services, has focused on a more iconic version of the logo that allows much greater flexibility in application, reducing the original coloured versions to the now familiar keyline. The keyline logo has become the single most important version.

This is a creative business. 3 is not simply a new telephone network, but a rich multi-media service distributing a wide range of information and entertainment as well as state of the art communications that includes video calling and downloads, web access and TV. In Italy, 3 is the country's biggest digital distributor of music and offers several TV channels as well as opportunities for customers to contribute content they make themselves. To reflect this rich and diverse service the brand identity needed to develop so as to have greater resonance with customers.

We began to look at how the logo could come alive in three dimensional form. An early example was a version created to help promote a new game on the UK service called Dragon

Island. Suddenly the logo became a fire-breathing dragon. We started to see that this modern brand could break with convention and present itself more like a multi-media business than a conventional telephone company. Other examples include the logo in the form of a tennis ball or football for promoting sports, or more recently in the form of a car tyre and wheel for motor racing.

Today we have more than 100 versions of the logo. The special logos are created for specific purposes and never "just because we can". Each has a particular relevance. For example, 3 offers customers various music related products and services including audio and video downloads. What better then than to have 3 represent itself as a guitar, a "special" version that has been used around the world. Taking on the form of a music icon helps demonstrate that 3 is as into music as its customers; 3's passion for music sets it apart from competitors that merely sell music because they can. Italy has taken this version a stage further and has made four real rock guitars in the shape of the logo.

The International Brand Group comprises a group of talented specialists. The team continues to develop the brand working with all the operating companies, including creating new versions of the 3 logo as they are needed and making them available on line to all brand users. A specialist designer in the creative team creates full three-dimensional computer models, adding textures and details as required. A powerful computer helps reproduce images of the highest quality, even at the scale of an advertising billboard.

Currently the International Brand Group is developing a creative platform for presenting 3's content across the handset, in retail and in communications, so the identity will stay fresh. A living brand evolves constantly and helps us stay ahead of the competition by demanding that we always remain relevant to customers.

We are always different but always 3.



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