

TRANSFORMING WATERSTONS

(NOT THE BOOKSTORE)

How a new website and 12-month marketing strategy increased profit by 695%

BACKGROUND

Waterstons is not a household brand. Apart from having a name similar to that of a certain bookstore, they're not a company you'll have ever heard of. They're not 'mainstream', they don't work with large, flexible marketing budgets, in truth their product, at first sight, isn't even that sexy. They do however, employ 90+ staff and turnover £8 million, developing business-changing technology and software solutions for large organisations. They're a prime example of the customer intimate, reputable B2B company that marketing agencies around the world have on their books.



OBJECTIVES

In collaboration, Primate and the Waterstons marketing team set out to release the Waterstons' personality online. We wanted to embody their incredible - and often invisible to the outside world - values; we wanted to redefine their messaging to attract the attention of large corporations; we wanted to improve their sales and increase their profit margin. In essence, we wanted to create a website that was as authentic as its people and evoked the company's unique personality and office atmosphere, online.

SPECIFICALLY, OUR GOALS WERE:

- » *Redefine Waterstons' messaging. It had to far less techy and service led, instead focused on high-level context that would convey business benefits*
- » *Grow awareness of Waterstons' their work, their clients, and what they could offer to clients, both new and existing*
- » *Facilitate a 12 month, campaign-driven marketing strategy, in partnership with Waterstons' marketing agency Waterston Tanner & Co, that would see tangible results. It had to be low cost but high impact*
- » *Increase turnover and profit*

INSIGHT

Our research identified four target audiences:



MDs & CEOs

Top tier management in organisations, less interested in low-level detail more interested in high-level results and operational improvement. They push through big changes and unlock funds, thus our messaging had to convey inspiration and results.



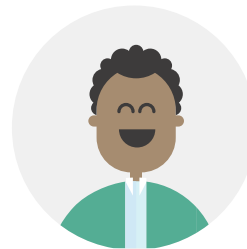
JOB APPLICANTS

Recruitment in the IT industry is competitive, with talented staff hard to find and retain. The strong values and Waterstons' fun personality had to be conveyed, as did the excellent benefits on offer (unlimited holidays, for instance), all presented prominently.



INDUSTRY PEERS

Exchanging knowledge and affecting the industry is a key mandate of Waterstons, delivered through events, conferences and hack days. Peers in the industry were a core audience, not just because of the benefit of information swap, but for the extended networks they could open doors to.



IT DIRECTORS & MANAGERS

Tech-savvy operators who had to have their questions answered. Involved in the minutia and the granular details, information about precise services, implementation and benefits had to be on offer. Solutions and outcomes had to be tangibly demonstrated.

CHALLENGES

Waterstons have been around since 1994 and, over the past twenty-odd years, have delivered a huge amount of work for a huge number of clients; changing the way the company was perceived by clients, peers, and the extended industry wasn't going to be easy.

Internal mindsets would be difficult to shift as well. Opinions ranged from "why can't we do this ourselves" to "what's wrong with what we currently have", and all needed to be overcome. £30,000 for the website and £10,000 for annual marketing assets gave us a reasonable budget, however expectations - and the desired return on the investment - were high.

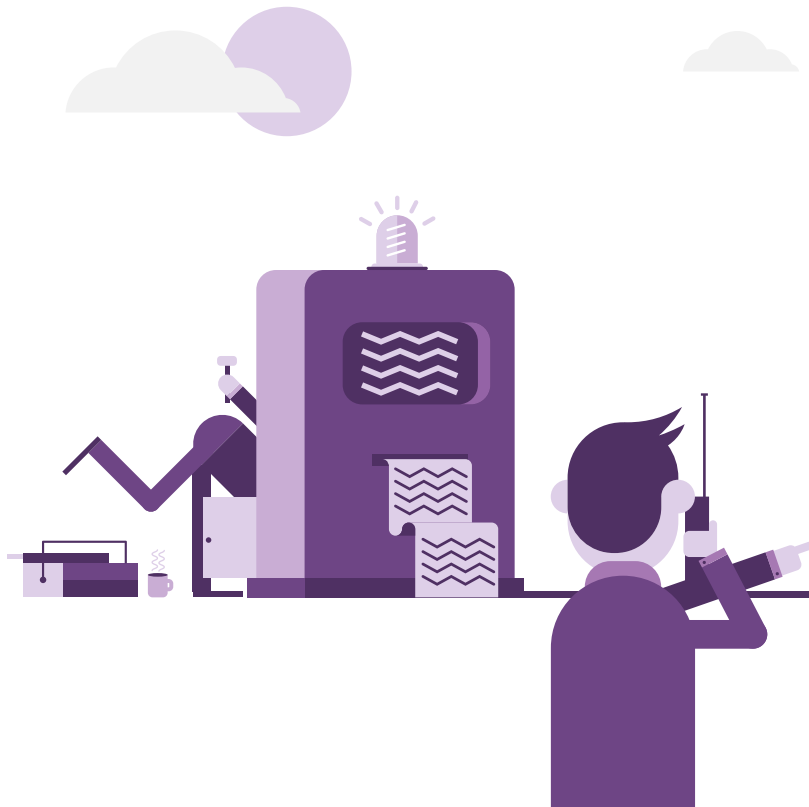


ALEX WATERSTON
EXECUTIVE TRANSFORMATION CONSULTANT

"Primate raised our expectations of our own website. They pushed us to be creative, to think differently and to bring our values to the forefront. We ended up completely rethinking the way we talk about our company. Our FD has described it as 'the best money we've ever spent' and he is absolutely right."

OPPORTUNITIES

Of course, with age and an existing network comes huge opportunity. Waterstons had an excellent client base of large blue-chip companies to reach out to and expand upon, ranging from Cundall and Shell, to Calbee and the British Library. They had 90 dedicated staff to utilise as internal advocates, most with strong existing relationships with clients, and a large historical database of contacts to get back in touch with. These foundations were a solid position from which to build a great digital presence.



STRATEGY

We recognised we needed to take a holistic approach. Specifically we committed to:

- » *Craft a web presence, visual style and tone of voice that would imbue the values of Waterstons*
- » *Develop an overarching marketing campaign and 'inbound' strategy, in partnership with strategic marketing agency Waterston Tanner & Co*
- » *Facilitate the publication of genuinely useful content and enable quick and easy knowledge sharing to position Waterstons as a thought leader*
- » *Create an internal networking programme that would encourage social media activity from staff and help them develop their relationships with client contacts*
- » *Run quarterly, themed campaigns to promote the key benefits of engaging Waterstons*
- » *Ensure the business was head and shoulders above competitors*

In short, we would aggressively promote the services of Waterstons using an audience-led, integrated marketing approach before directing the audience to the website for further information, encouraging visitors to get in touch and forge a new relationship.

APPROACH TO THE WEBSITE

Ambition & clarity

Strategy & planning

Originality & Execution

Results

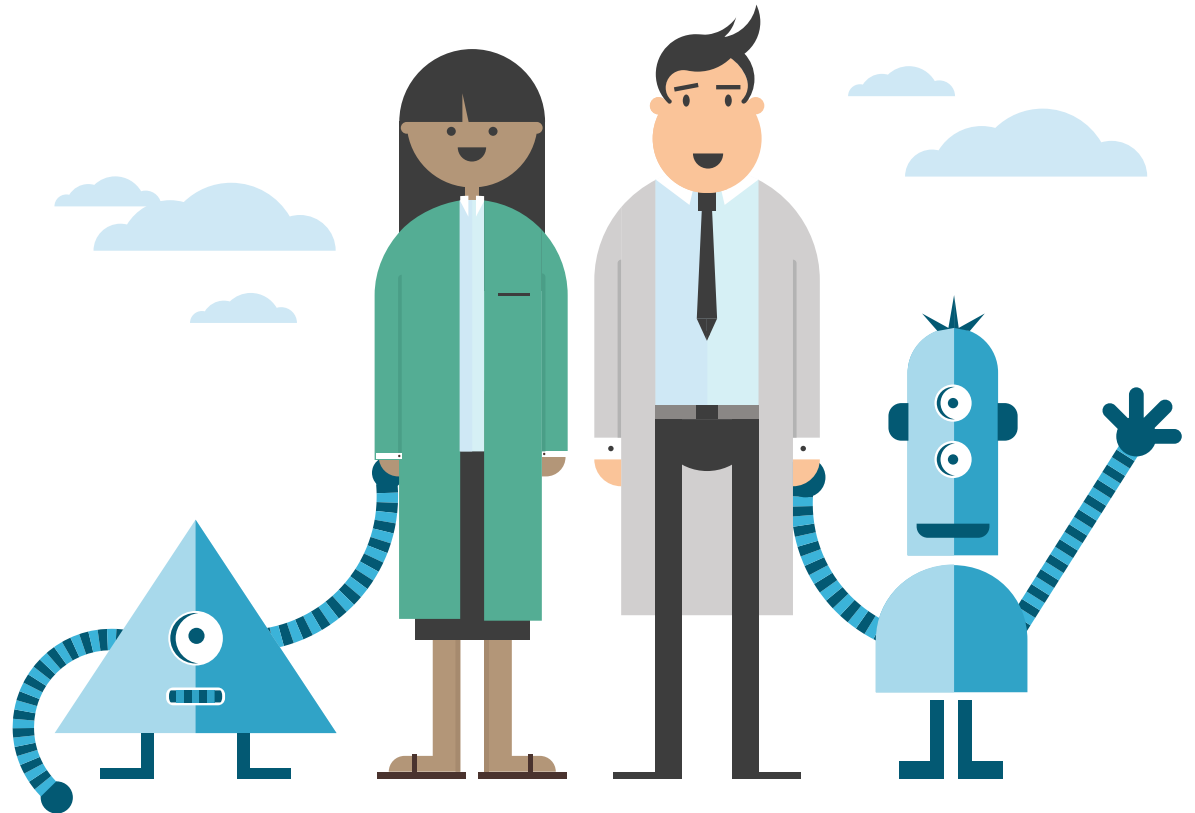
» We avoided the traditional clichés associated with professional services and crafted a colourful, illustration led route. The illustrations were designed to evoke the Waterstons personality and also convey the benefits that their work delivers, quickly and succinctly.

» We built on our audience research and developed content that was fundamentally important to users: explaining the 'Five Ways' Waterstons can help a business and creating in-depth case studies, for example.



SHOWING THE REAL WATERSTONS

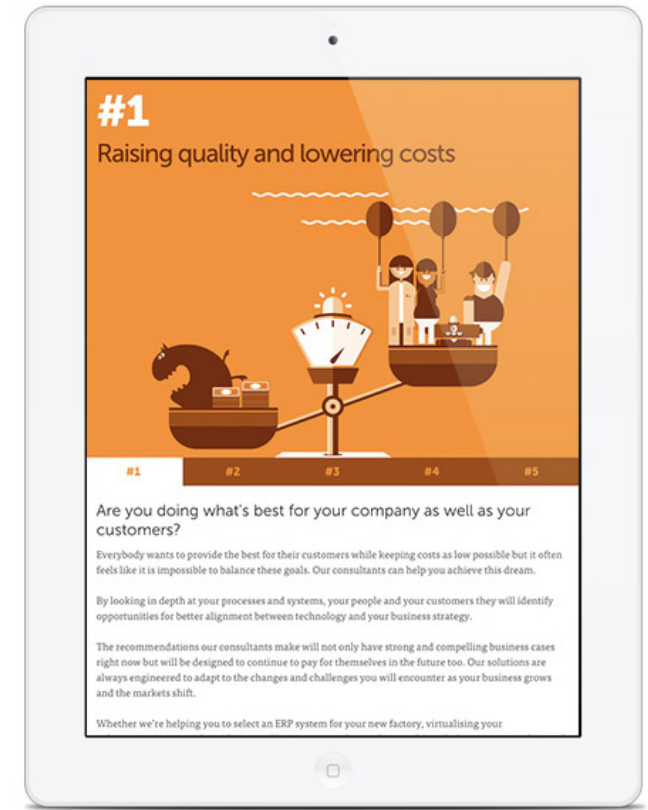
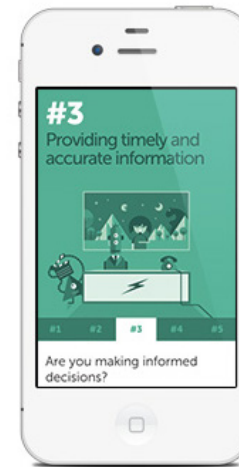
- » *An illustrative approach was adopted to really bring to life the Waterstons culture. Eye-catching, unique and completely unlike any of their competitors, this helped set Waterstons apart and capture the attention of clients. The illustrations became integral to the on-going marketing materials and campaign efforts.*
- » *A huge local employer with over 90 staff and 20+ years of experience is nothing to take lightly. A timeline, in-depth people portfolios, and a compelling career section helped Waterstons align with industry peers and desired customers.*



CONNECTING WITH TOP-LEVEL MANAGEMENT

Although IT directors and managers carry out in-depth research, it's often the MDs, CEOs and FDs who hold the purse strings. Therefore, to better connect with them, we:

- » *Redefined the messaging of Waterstons to position them as purveyors of high level business solutions. No longer did they 'supply bespoke IT services', instead they now worked with customers to 'build better businesses'*
- » *Refocused and prioritised the '5 Ways' that Waterstons could help clients. This, combined with strong holistic messaging, white papers and real case studies reinforced a stronger connection with the senior management of blue-chip organisations*



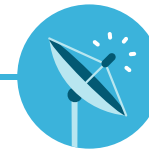
Raising quality and lowering costs



Acquiring and retaining customers



Providing timely and accurate information



Improving teamwork and communication

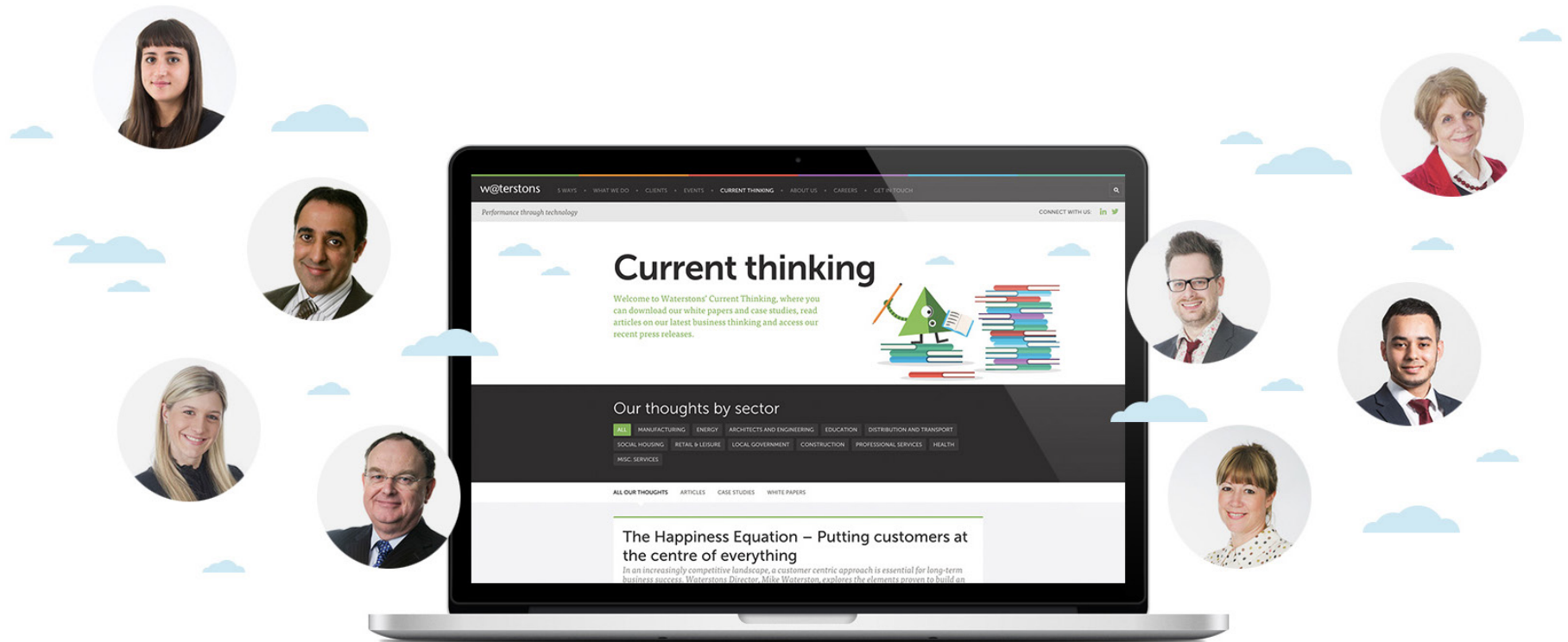


Reducing risk and increasing security

DEMONSTRATING DETAIL

Another key audience was IT directors, managers and developers. Whilst MDs and FDs would ultimately sign-off funds and need to be convinced, the IT department needed to understand the micro-details to satisfy their needs. Demonstrating knowledge, skill, and examples were key.

- » *Services were detailed over two-tiers; a single, quick glance high-level tier that described what Waterstons did in simple language; supported by a second, comprehensive tier that detailed the offering, examples, and corresponding teams in full*
- » *Current Thinking, a large archive on the site, was created to house case studies and white papers, providing knowledge and resources on a huge variety of topics*



QUARTERLY CAMPAIGNS

Working in partnership with Waterstons' strategic marketing agency, Waterston Tanner & Co, a quarterly marketing campaign strategy was developed forming the backbone to the entire marketing strategy. Following customer aligned themes, each campaign featured highly focused advertising, unique inbound content, and educational events, all underpinned by social media promotion.

- » *'Five Three One' introduced the new branding, direction and website to the marketplace, and focused on the services, benefits and values of the business; Five ways to performance improvement, three core services and one trusted partner*
- » *'The Great Quest' took clients on a journey, explaining how to raise quality whilst lowering costs, the holy grail for the production industry*
- » *'The Happiness Equation' promoted the importance of both acquiring, and then, more significantly, retaining customers*



GROWING THE NETWORK

Following launch of the new site, we continued to facilitate the holistic marketing strategy developed by Waterston Tanner & Co. The core goals of the 18 month strategy were to see an increase in:

- » *Brand recognition and equity*
- » *The reach and engagement of educational 'content'*
- » *The number of relationships with potential customers*
- » *The conversion of relationships to tangible sale*

TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS THE STRATEGY FOCUSED ON:

- » *The development of sector, technology or demographically focused educational 'inbound marketing' content in the form of white papers, case studies and articles*
- » *Social media activity (specifically across Twitter and LinkedIn) driven by all staff members across the organisation*
- » *Intimate customer events, organised to backup and promote the theme of each quarterly campaign*
- » *Every team member contributed to direct sales using a new 'worker bee' company model, promoting 'hive' like harvesting and processing of new business. Job titles were simplified to improve clarity and all staff were assigned roles as 'artisan bees', 'guardians' or extrovert 'harvesters'.*



SCALE & RESULTS

- Ambition & clarity
- Strategy & planning
- Originality & Execution
- Results

£30,000

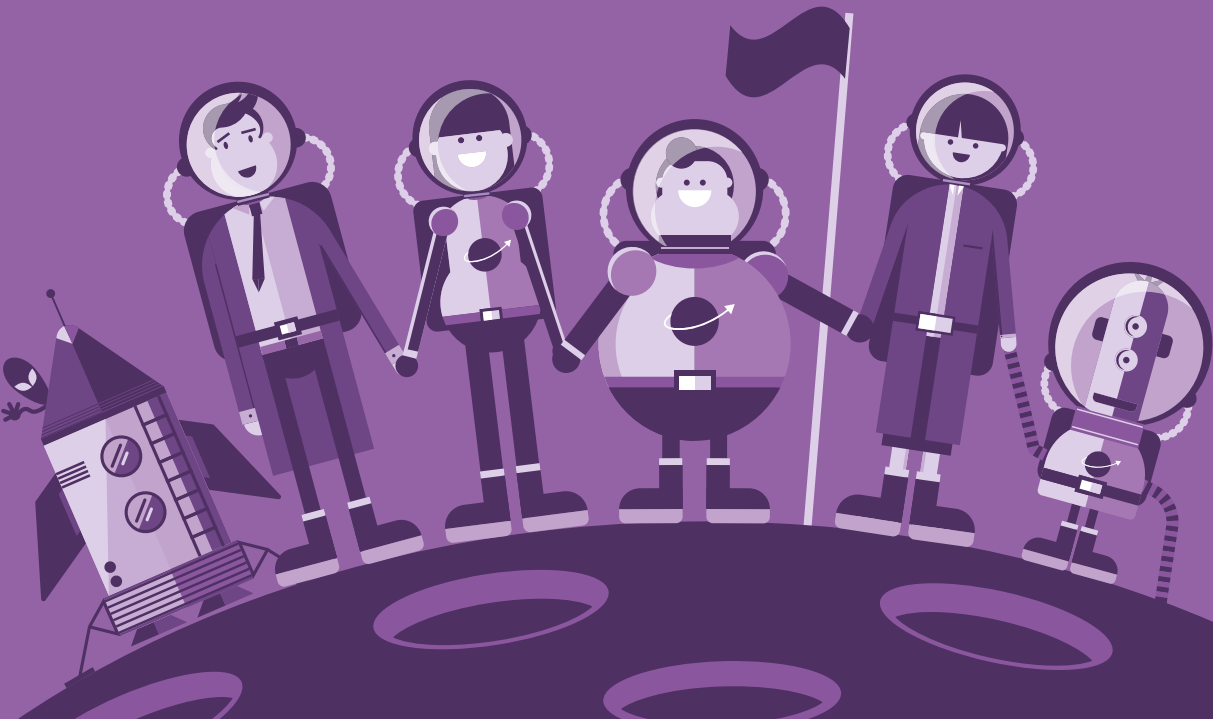
one-off website investment

£10,000

annual campaign and marketing spend

£183,626

company profit increase, 695% uplift!



WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

505%

*increase in visits: from 42 uniques daily to
212.5 uniques daily*

465,943

total campaign impressions

LEAD GENERATION

116

Campaign event attendees

52

new leads

20

new client relationships

CONSULTANCY SALES

10%

increase from last year

695%

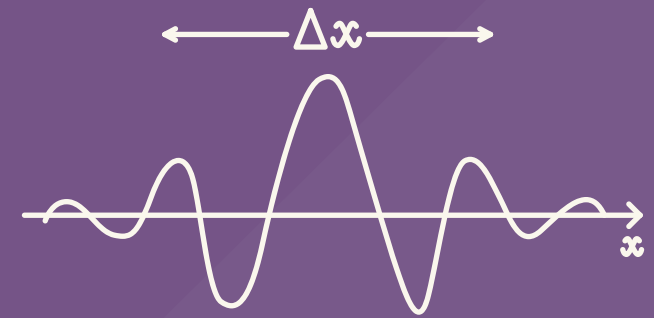
increase in company profit

£183,626

increase in company profit

LEARNINGS

- » *You don't need to be a big brand or have a seemingly sexy product to realise success*
- » *Professional services can still see an incredible uplift with a consolidated marketing, brand and digital strategy*
- » *Leveraging relationships and marketing directly to business customers is hugely important in growing sales in the B2B market*



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$$\cancel{\Delta p}$$

