

Case Study



Global Business Development

Strategic Foundation
Market Assessment
Positioning
Brand Platform
Audience Segmentation
Pipeline Development
Website & Collateral
Messaging Outreach
Initiatives

The Client:

Global Architecture and Design Firm

The Challenge:

Optimize the launch & market success of the company's design research and strategy division

The Situation

Founded in 1943, this global architecture firm focuses on life-transforming and experience-enhancing design. With offices in Beijing, Boston, Columbus, London, Los Angeles, New York, Pune, San Francisco, Seattle and Shanghai; the firm has a prestigious client base, a solid reputation, and a well developed portfolio of credentials. The team includes more than 700 researchers, strategists, architects, anthropologists, planners, nurses and interior designers who generate ideas that have a profound and lasting impact. Their research and strategy team is particularly skilled at developing human centered platforms that drive innovative and experiential buildings and space design for their clients and end-user customers. This exceptional division was evolving into a well respected, stand-out consulting practice. However, a spectrum of strategic decisions were needed. A number of consultancies had been engaged for input over three years, but a compelling market strategy hadn't been finalized. ISD was engaged to help the team overcome barriers that hindered the market launch of this exceptional practice. Primary requests included objective assessment, reframing of primary hurdles and needed workstreams, and facilitation of strategy sessions to arrive at breakthrough conclusions and a clear path forward.

Social Design's Approach

The firm had scheduled an offsite strategy retreat and requested ISD to jumpstart the event by facilitating the first two days of sessions. Our pre-work began with a thorough review of the company's existing marketing initiatives, strategies, research and business intelligence. We conducted a full day Strategic Conversation consisting of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders via group discussion, one-on-one interviews, as well as video conferences with remote offices in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the present situation, growth aspirations, angsts and barriers. We identified and re-framed key gaps and opportunities, and we proposed the recommended work streams that would help the team break through barriers, establish a clear strategic framework, and move the business forward. We aligned on steps and designed the work sessions. On Day Two, we led the teams through group sessions and break-out exercises that defined critical where-to-play and how-to-win strategies. We captured and transcribed all session output and our post-work consisted of translating outcomes into a strategic marketing and communications roadmap that guided messaging, collateral and business initiatives, solidly positioning the business for successful launch in the market.

Results

- Unearthed key insights and gaps that re-framed the business challenges
- Identified essential workstreams needed to move the business forward
- Facilitated highly effective sessions that resulted in real time business solutions
- Brought focus and clarity to the businesses value, offerings, and messaging
- Developed strategic roadmap that guided effective positioning, communication and outreach initiatives

advancing and enhancing the human condition, by design