





Thinking edge in design – for confidence in brand expression with a new web and brand portal

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Our thinking is the force behind our products and solutions: thinking that's innovative, collaborative and pragmatic.

In this series we share stories on what makes Saab what it is - our people and our products, our ways of working, our heritage, or our technologies.

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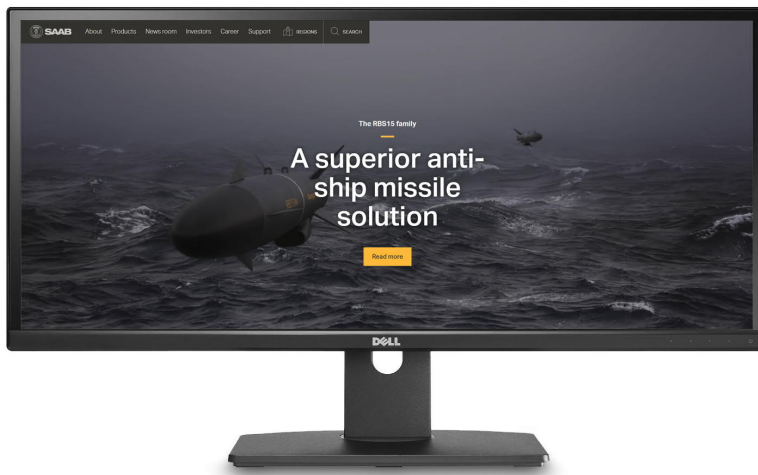
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Welcome back to another article in the Our Edge article series! This one is a rather long read! Therefore we've arranged the following three anchor links to the separate chapters below. Enjoy!

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Saab's new design thinking: A confident expression of who we are

Saab's design thinking is evolving, updating the ways in which we present ourselves and our products to the outside world. Brand Design Manager Johan Mångsén explains how design leadership creates business value.

The eagle-eyed among you may have noticed that we have recently been gradually updating assets on the brand portal and in other communications. We have added new typography, a fresh colour palette and a new layout system that's defined by asymmetry and depth.

Over the rest of this year we'll have the launch of the updated brand portal – brand.saab.com, and a single, unified website -- the new Saab.com. The appearance of our offices, exhibition stands, publications, motion graphics and much more are also being modernised. The changes even include working with product developers to design uniform user interfaces, reflecting this digital age and the new generation of operators.

Embracing change

Maybe you're one of those wondering why we needed to change things, but, in truth, the update was long overdue. The previous corporate visual identity was ten years old. That's a lifetime in design terms, and our look was tied to a time when communication was mainly based around printed output rather than digital touch points. The world constantly changes and evolves, and so must brands, including Saab's brand, to stay relevant.



Johan Mångsen, brand design manager.

"We needed to get away from the analogue approach to reflect the digital platforms we're using every day," explains Johan Mångsen, Saab's Brand Design Manager, who is coordinating this massive project.

"For example, using capital letters in headlines. It looks like we're shouting at the reader when you see that in the digital sphere. And our images were quite flat-looking.

"But design is not just key in terms of software – it's about being user friendly and how people interact with our products, too. That's why we're working on the product side too."

A collaborative process

With his long career in design, Johan Mångsen knows well that such extensive changes need engagement across the business; not only from communications.

"It's not a one-man show but an everyday collaboration," he says.

"We want Saab's thinking edge to be connected to the design thinking, so it all starts with the customer; in this case the different business areas and product developers. I've been asking people to tell me about their challenges and ask me questions so that we can solve problems together."

He adds, "In a sense, the whole process over the past couple of years has been a soft launch. We explained to the business and market our plans for the new visual identity, beginning with the redesign of the exhibition booths, and gave them 18 months to change the old materials."

But he's keen to add that it's an ongoing process, describing it as an "evolution" and not a rebrand; after all, our core messages and vision remain the same.

Design leadership helps us 'belong with purpose'

He has a lot on his plate, but thankfully Johan Mångsen is passionate about the power of good design and excited by the challenge of sharpening Saab's design thinking.

"For me, this project is about the importance of design and design leadership within Saab," he says.

"In this business of constant change we have to evolve but also have a consistency in the brand experience. The logo and colours need to be fixed, but otherwise it all needs to be adaptable and contemporary so it can serve our brand image better in whichever setting it's being used."

Mångsen likens it to the psychological boost someone has when they're dressed to impress and feeling good about how they look. It breeds self-confidence.

"At Saab we talk about 'belong with purpose'. Design is crucial to that. It's about creating a strong brand that people are proud to work with," he explains.

"It's a confident expression of the company's identity and it sets tone for what we stand for. If we can take that on board, we'll look confident, and then our customers will have confidence in us too."

One-stop-shop for our brand assets



A new brand portal is also about to be released. With its broader range of content and updated design thinking, our new brand portal will make it easier for us to communicate effectively on behalf of Saab. Brand Design Manager Johan Mångsén walks us through the new tool that will be up and running within the next few weeks.

What is the brand portal?

"The brand portal is an online resource for anyone who is communicating on behalf of Saab. It's basically a one-stop shop for Saab brand assets, such as the logo, typefaces and everything relating to our uniform design system, so that we have the right feel, look and design in which to frame our messages and product marketing."

Why did we need to update the brand portal?

"The world constantly changes and evolves, and so must brands, including Saab's, to stay relevant. Above all, this is a digital age, and we need the right resources to communicate in the digital sphere. Previously much of what we had was more tailored to printed communications, so this is a necessary update that will help anyone communicating on Saab's behalf to present our brand and messages in the right setting."

What kind of new things does it offer?

"We have expanded the range of content. The portal now covers digital and product design as well as the classic logo and design content. We've also provided guidelines on how we communicate and why it's important to involve design – if we integrate design properly it gives us the self-confidence to sell Saab effectively to our customers and stakeholders."

What's your general message to users of the brand portal?

"It's going to be a lot simpler to use because everything is available from the same site. It will help them to help Saab to be an even stronger brand by making it easier to do things right. But I also want to stress that this is a collaboration between design and communications and all business areas in

Saab. We invite colleagues to work with us to share best practice in communications, ask us questions or make points, be it about social media, film, text or anything else we use to communicate. Ultimately, it's not 'I am Saab' or 'You are Saab'; it's 'We are Saab', so we need to work together to make this work for all of us."

Will there be any training for using it?

"Everyone who'll be working with the new brand portal will receive clear guidelines for best practice so that they know what to use and when."

When is the new brand portal being launched?

"We're almost ready to go live. We've been working on it for the past year and we expect to launch it in June. You'll get more instructions here on SaabNet as we go live!"