



The Real ROI of Design:

How Creative Impacts Growth in B2B Brands

Why Better Branding, Smarter Content, and Consistent Design Outperform Tactics Alone

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Commissioned by Fresh01



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We are living in a digital age that is dominated by AI content, hyper-automation, and channel saturation, and many B2B businesses underestimate the impact of creative quality...

But design isn't just decoration, it's a driver of engagement, differentiation, and conversion.

This paper explores how strategic, well-executed creatives directly influence growth, retention, and ROI across marketing, sales, and brand-building efforts.

We bring together insights from McKinsey, Forrester, and original client case studies to show how creatives done well, and delivered consistently, deliver measurable returns.



Many B2B brands focus heavily on tactics:

Funnels

Automation

AI

Email sequences

SEO

But when creative execution falls flat,
performance does too.

”

Companies that prioritise **design** outperform industry-benchmark growth by 2x.

— McKinsey Design Index (2020)



In this paper, we shift
the perspective from:

“What does
it **cost**?”



“What does
it **return**?”



Key Findings

Study

Insight

McKinsey Design Index

Top quartile design-led companies grow 2x faster than competitors and generate 32% more revenue over 5 years.

Forrester (B2B Trust Survey, 2023)

57% of decision-makers said poorly designed content made them question a vendor's credibility.

Adobe Digital Economy Index

Brands investing in design systems and visual consistency increase marketing efficiency by 23%.

Canva for Business (2024)

68% of mid-market companies say design is "important" but only 31% have a design-led process in place.

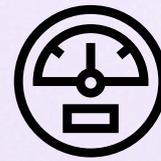


Common ROI Drivers



Higher engagement

(click-through rates, dwell time)



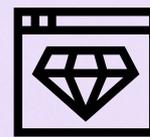
Faster comprehension

(especially for complex offerings)



Better conversion

(more leads + faster sales cycles)



Brand equity

(increased perceived value)



Hidden Cost

Impact

Unclear Brand Message

Confusion → Bounce → Lost revenue

Inconsistent Assets

Internal friction, off-brand execution

Delayed Campaigns

Missed opportunities, revenue gaps

Repetitive Briefings

Wasted time, duplicated effort

Poor Internal Buy-In

Lower adoption of marketing assets

”

The average marketing team loses 28% of execution time due to design and asset delays.

— HubSpot Ops Survey (2023)



01

Baseline Performance

- Web conversion rates
- Cost per MQL
- Email engagement
- Brand recall metrics

02

Design Investment

- Retainer or creative team cost
- Hours of asset production
- Tools/software

03

Output Metrics

- Speed to launch
- Cost per asset
- Number of assets reused

04

Outcome Metrics

- Uplift in lead conversion
- Revenue per campaign
- Retention or renewal uplift
- Brand NPS / perception data

 [Download the ROI Calculator + Scorecard](#) 



Client: Cordwallis Group

INDUSTRY:
Automotive & Commercial Vehicles

50% reduction
in asset turnaround time

PROBLEM:
Inconsistent brand visuals and over-reliance on overstretched in-house team

3x campaign
asset creation & output

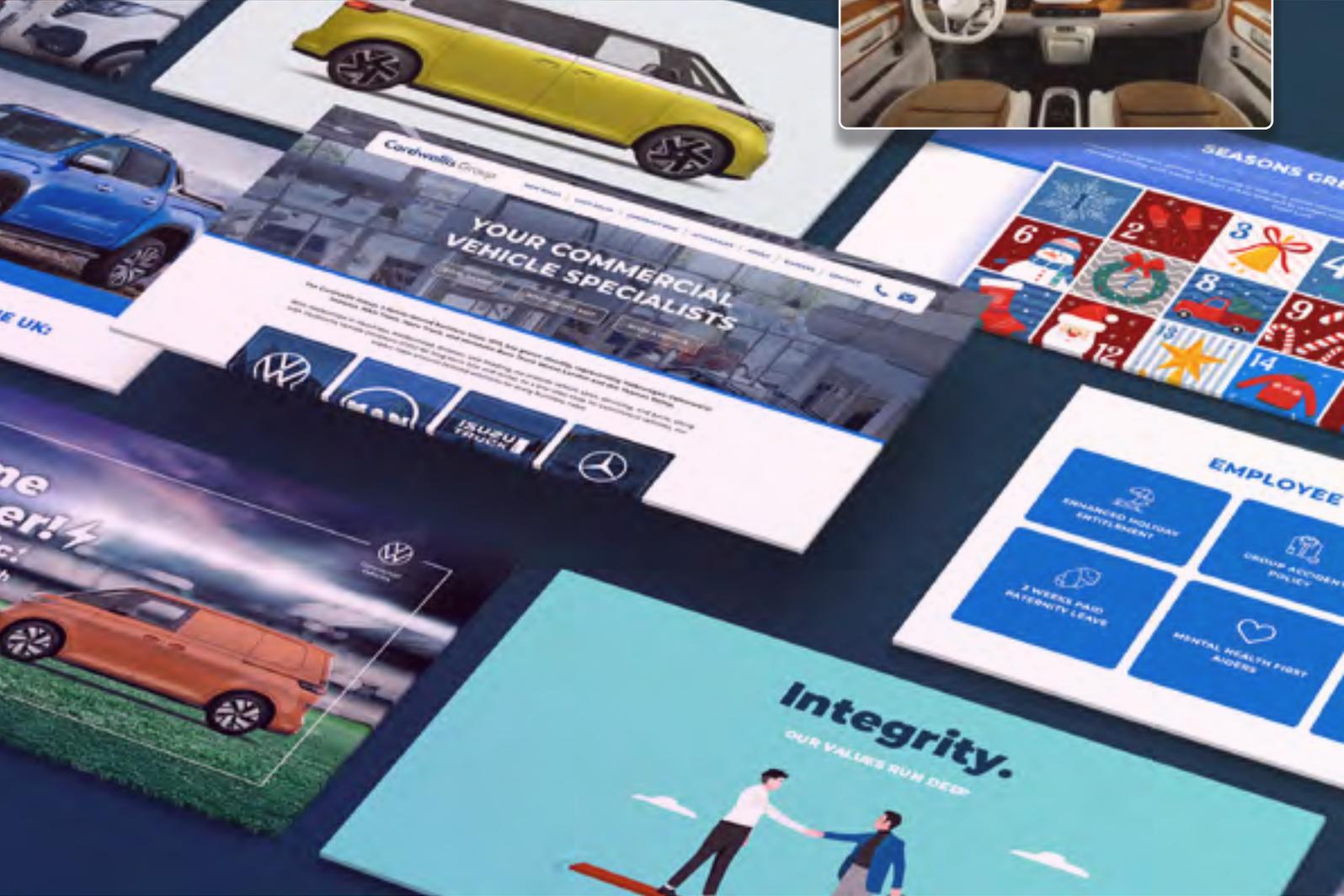
SOLUTION:
Fresh01 embedded model (video, digital, brand, events)

+27% engagement
across digital activations



Fresh01 didn't just deliver visuals. They gave us a creative system, and became an extension of our team.

— Marketing Manager - Cordwallis Group (2023)





Model	Cons	Pros
In-House	Costly, Hard to scale	Consistent Centralised
Freelancers	Inconsistent Unscalable	Flexible Project-based
Embedded Team (Fresh01)	Requires onboarding + trust (but worth it)	Consistent, senior-led, scalable, no overhead



The embedded model is ideal for lean B2B teams looking to scale output without internal hiring delays.

— Fresh01 Market Fit Assessment (2025)



Getting Started

- Audit your current creative assets (brand, content, decks)
 - Measure what content converts, and what doesn't
 - Identify internal gaps (design, messaging, delivery)
-

Next Steps:

- Trial a fractional creative model (start with 1—2 projects)
 - Implement a design request system with prioritisation
 - Measure time saved and turnaround improvements
-

Advanced Strategies:

- Introduce a design system for reusability
- Align creative KPIs to business goals
- Treat creative as a revenue function, not a cost centre



Imagine your business as a bucket you're trying to fill with revenue. Every marketing campaign, sales call, and lead magnet is water pouring in, but if your design is poor, you've got an invisible hole in the bottom. You might not notice it at first, but over time, the drip becomes a drain on your growth.

I recently did some research into poorly constructed LinkedIn profiles. We discovered that around 20% of potential prospects found the profile underwhelming, unclear, or inconsistent, and they quietly move on. No message saying, "Not interested", just gone.

That opportunity never makes it into your sales pipeline. That's exactly what happens when your website, pitch decks, or campaign assets suffer from weak creative. Poor design fails to move people on to the next step in the buying cycle, not because your offer is bad, but because the perceived quality doesn't match the promise.

Just as shoddy packaging makes you doubt the product inside, low-quality creatives subtly erode trust and interest. It's a subconscious filter buyers use to decide whether to keep engaging or to walk away.

This research paper flips the old thinking that design is an "extra cost" and positions it where it belongs, as a direct contributor to conversion metrics and revenue growth. We show:

- **The data** — Design-led companies grow twice as fast and generate significantly higher ROI.
- **The hidden cost of poor creative** — missed opportunities, slower sales cycles, lower engagement
- **The embedded team advantage** — how having senior creative capacity on tap removes bottlenecks and drives measurable performance gains



When design is treated as an investment, not a luxury, you plug the hole in the bucket.

This means every pound you spend on marketing works harder, flows faster, and stays in the business.

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Want to See the ROI of Better Creative?

Fresh01 helps marketing leaders improve delivery, speed up execution, and produce design that performs, not just looks good

[Book a Creative Audit Call](#)

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