

# RETHINKING MOVEMENT

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Nomad was established in 2006 by two brothers with a clear vision – to make mobility products that excite people. Design was therefore always a key strategy, but with no internal design skills, nomad has had to outsource its design. The successful management of the design process, with its multi-agency, multidisciplinary team, has resulted in an industry leading product (the mk1 wheelchair) and the most desirable brand in the mobility marketplace.

Managing a team this diverse for the first time presented certain problems. However, goal congruence was achieved by encouraging inter-team communication and establishing clear project deliverables, which linked directly back to the company's strategic goal of leading through design.

We launched in April this year, and we are now a team of 3 like-minded individuals. As a self-funded start-up, our strategy of leading through design had to work first time. It did. We are nomad, and this is our journey...

## LEADERSHIP IN DESIGN INNOVATION

Nomad was created to shift the focus of mobility products from clinical, functional solutions to well designed, well presented products and to engage people with an aspirational lifestyle brand, unique to the industry. Design was identified as being the primary driver for change and it has remained a core value to nomad.

From engineering-based product design to textiles and cross-media branding, the launch of nomad was a multi-disciplinary project, involving several different design agencies, requiring a clear vision, and using that vision consistently across varied media. Coherence of brand, product and image is paramount in nomad and is embedded in every action that we undertake.

While essentially we are a manufacture and service company, nomad's culture is heavily design-based. The creation and delivery of our 'leading through design' agenda is achieved by bringing together the right people, both internally and externally. Externally, leaders in each of the required disciplines are sought out. As experts in their respective fields, nomad is able to benefit from a wealth of experience and talent that simply doesn't exist in-house.

This sector leadership has been achieved, as nomad Directors are now regularly asked to contribute to industry debate, particularly with regards to design (see: Media Exposure).

- Forum speaker at Beyond Boundaries 2009 exhibition, Farnborough
- Article on 'The Importance of Design in Mobility Products', in Rehcare World Magazine, 2009 (including cover image of nomad's mk1 wheelchair – the new benchmark in wheelchair design)
- Introductory editorial in Bespoke Wheelchair Section, Disability Product News, Aug 2009.

## DRIVING CHANGE THROUGH DESIGN

Design was integral to nomad before any other feature. In order to carve a niche, a commitment to good design was chosen as the primary corporate value (see: Nomad Core Values). Design is therefore all-encompassing – from product generation and marketing to all points of customer contact and delivery.

Nomad is also committed to driving change in the mobility industry through design. This process began internally and will feed onwards to the mobility community at large as nomad continues to foster new technologies, processes and materials in their industry-leading designs. Leading the way in design gives nomad a competitive advantage that others are sure to follow simultaneously, thereby achieving our long term goal of improving mobility products through design.

**Example:** Castings are rarely used in wheelchairs, but are used extensively in mk1, in order to achieve the flowing lines which define this product (see: fig 1.1).

**Example:** Most wheelchairs offer a black Nylon upholstery, but nomad offers many colours and a design that allows them to be swapped and accessorized like clothes (see: Attic 2, Design Team).

## EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN CO-ORDINATION

Cross-pollination of ideas occurs when different disciplines come together. Meetings were therefore held with all available teams, in various locations, to allow new environments to promote free and innovative thought processes.

Communication is key. The opinions of all design stakeholders are sought and a framework of perpetual feedback and open dialogue is maintained.

For example, decisions made on branding would be communicated to product designers, and vice versa. All parties were part of the decision making process (see: Design Interaction and Management).

Both formal and informal channels of communication exist to further enhance a culture of innovation. A quick chat in a café is often as effective as a balanced scorecard or a 5 page report in controlling the direction of design. It is, of course, necessary to have the correct formal controls in place as well.

As such, all design work is drafted to strict briefs and criteria. All work is then reviewed against the brief and is assessed for its compliance to nomad brand and corporate values. Any non-compliant work is rejected and re-drafted. Review process begins again.

## STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE

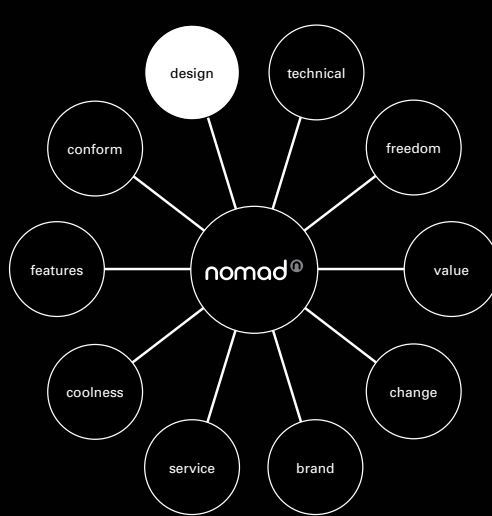
Strategy since pre-launch was to enter a highly competitive, specialist market in a position of advantage. Design was always seen as a means to ensure the success of this strategy.

The mobility market, being a medical field, is heavily based on trust, authority and reputation. As a start-up, nomad had none of these. As well as designing the right product, a brand and marketing campaign was needed to address these points, and to assert an image of strength.

Achievement of these strategic objectives is ensured by setting clear goals for nomad and clear deliverables for design. Communication across all levels of the company ensures goal congruence and the effective implementation of all design projects.

The effectiveness of our launch was substantial. Considering the limited budget, nomad successfully launched a new company, a new product and a new brand into a very competitive, established market (see: Market Research Responses and Media Exposure).

### Nomad Core Values



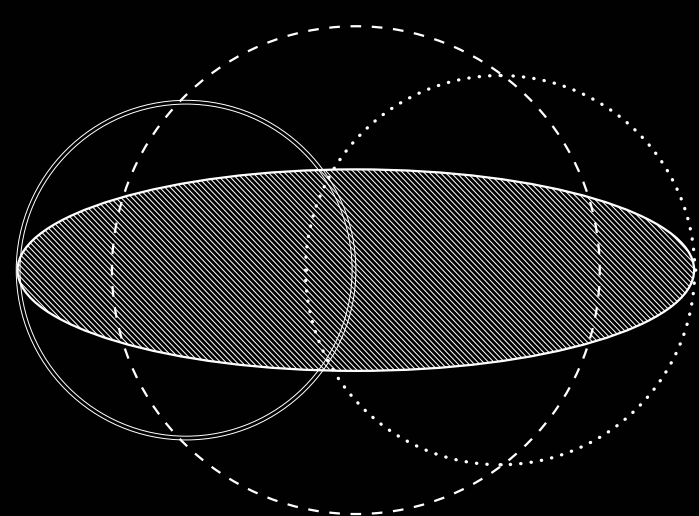
### Design Interaction and Management

This illustration represents the levels of interaction between the various agencies and how nomad played a pivotal role in facilitating this interaction.

Interaction was one of the most important factors of the project. Each separate agency had to solve design problems in its own right, but also had to consider the overall direction of the project.

As project owner, however, nomad had to allow a certain amount of fluid, organic interaction between agencies. Nomad had to drive the project forward by steering each agency in the right direction.

Excellent communication and project management skills were key to ensuring that both things happened simultaneously.



### Market Research Responses

**1. Wheelchair Design**  
 "Let me start by congratulating you on designing a fantastic wheelchair. I have been in a chair for 27 years and the market has been crying out for something like this for years. WELL DONE!"

**2. Branding and Marketing**  
 Regular trade enquiries, first quarter sales of £1,500 and successful endorsements are all testament to the success of our branding and marketing.

### Media Exposure

Since our launch in April, nomad has quickly gained a reputation as being a leader in design. Examples include being approached to write essays on bespoke wheelchair design and being asked to compose an article on the importance of design in mobility products.

Nomad's mk1 chair, with its superior marketing photography was also selected to feature on the cover of Rehcare's show magazine. Rehcare is Europe's largest mobility exhibition.

This media exposure is evidence of the coming together of superbly designed product elements with solid marketing materials.



1 - 3 Rehcare World Edition, 1,2000 Front Cover & Future Article  
 4 - Disability Product News 2008, Bespoke Wheelchairs Feature

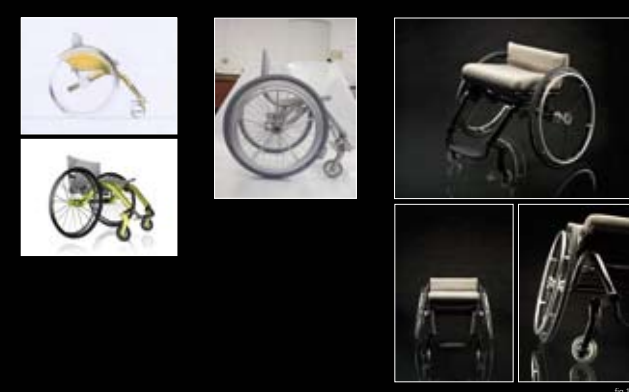
### Design Team

#### STUDIO SDA

**Product Design**  
 Studio SDA were responsible for concept generation through to detailed development of the wheelchair frame that is setting hearts racing. Within a tight performance and budget parameters, Studio SDA were given carte blanche with the initial concept. Further development allowed nomad to fine-tune the chosen design in order to meet the required specification. Studio SDA's trying skills, along with their engineering experience, allowed them to create a truly original wheelchair design that is both practical and beautiful.

"The challenge was to create a product with a simplicity extending far beyond pure mechanical functionality. It needed to inspire, excite and communicate the passion that both the design team at Studio SDA and Nomad had for creating a truly aspirational product in a sector of the market that had for too long been neglected."

- Studio SDA

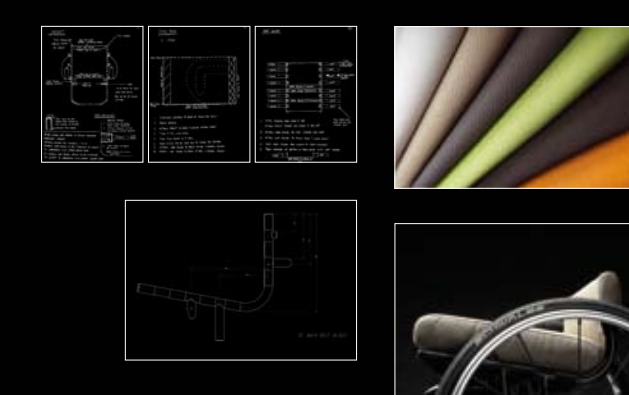


#### ATTIC 2

**Textile Design Upholstery Development**  
 Nomad commissioned designer, Angela Cadden (MBE), to develop a unique solution to wheelchair seating. In addition to greater upholstery comfort and strength, the new design allows for choices of colours, more seating positions, and accessorising through removable, swappable covers – another industry first.

"The challenges, variables and complexities within the project were evident from the start. However, our approach and vision for the seat-system was clear – to create a highly functional, production-efficient quality product, consider the individuality of the user and introduce an aesthetic treatment, detail and style to the 'jacket' influenced by technical fashion and inter changeable clothing. Our design solution – a seat-system that makes a positive lifestyle statement – not a disability statement."

- Attic 2



#### ELFEN

**Branding Graphic / Web Design Marketing**  
 Elfen helped nomad to build a market-leading brand, with many media. Elfen's brief was to develop a brand that was aspirational, yet inclusive. Nomad wished to be seen as sensitive to the market, while challenging established norms. The nomad brand was intended to be modern and innovative, without being over-designed and elitist and Elfen have helped nomad to create exactly this.

"We had to create an identity that reflected all of Nomad's key values, something that was not over designed or complex, and consistent across all media. The main issues were specific customer age range, the brand's visual language. Our solution was to concentrate on the design and build qualities of the product, knowing that these values would hold true to all potential customers of all ages and backgrounds."

- Elfen



### CHASSIS DEVELOPMENT

**August**  
 - A vision develops with Directors - Mobility Products need design  
 - Market research is carried out

**September**  
 - Industry benchmarks are set

**October**  
 - Brief is drafted  
 - Product Design Houses contacted, interviewed and compared

**December**  
 - Studio SDA is selected; brief is re-worked with design experience input

**January**  
 - Typical user persona created

**February**  
 - Brief finalised  
 - Design work begins, with constant feedback from Directors

**April**  
 - Concept options generated  
 - Options presented to stakeholders, opinions feedback to design and cross-referenced to brief  
 - Position audit performed to compare with initial design intent

**December**  
 - Design agreed

**March**  
 - Prototypes made and tested using new technologies and processes

**April**  
 - Performance and option feedback to design house

**November**  
 - Design improved, new prototypes made and tested

**December**  
 - Design frozen

**January**  
 - Testing and demonstration models manufactured

**April**  
 - Exhibitions attended, demonstrations performed

**May**  
 - Endorsements gained (TV personality, MBE Paralympian, key sector personalities)

**June**  
 - Sales volume increases

### UPHOLSTERY DESIGN

**November**  
 - Market research is carried out, in line with product design

**December**  
 - Benchmarks are set, wish-list drawn up  
 - Stakeholders opinions gathered

**February**  
 - Upholstery brief developed in line with product and brand values

**Upholstery Design Houses** contacted, interviewed and compared

**March**  
 - Attic 2 is selected; brief is re-worked with design experience input

**April**  
 - Brief finalised

**June**  
 - Design work begins, with constant feedback from Directors and Studio SDA (product design team)

**August**  
 - Concepts generated in line with product and brand values

**Options** presented to stakeholders, opinions feedback to design and cross-referenced to brief

**November**  
 - Option selected and developed

**January**  
 - Patterns made and product created, using new and improved textiles and fabrics

**Performance** and user opinion feedback to Attic 2

**Design** frozen

**March**  
 - Testing and demonstration units manufactured

**April**  
 - Exhibitions attended, demonstrations performed

**May**  
 - Endorsements gained (TV personality, MBE Paralympian, key sector personalities)

**June**  
 - Sales volume increases

### BRAND DEVELOPMENT

**August**  
 - A vision develops with Directors - Mobility brands need more creativity

**September**  
 - Industry benchmarks are set  
 - Stakeholders consulted: Users and trade healthcare professionals, retailers and competitors  
 - Corporate values are established immediately

**October**  
 - Design Wales, a design advisory service contacted to make use of industry expertise and experience

**January**  
 - Advisory service help flesh out a brief for the brand, source and help select design agencies for interview

**May**  
 - Interviews held, facilitated by design advisory service. Elfen selected to develop company branding

**July**  
 - Early work on branding begins

**September**  
 - Trademark research finds that original intended company name is already trademarked. Work begins on finding new name

**November**  
 - Nomad is selected as company name, due to its positive connotations of 'freedom', 'movement', 'adventure'

**December**  
 - Trademarking nomad begins

**January**  
 - Brief is re-worked in accordance to name change

**March**  
 - Brief finalised

**May**  
 - Mood Boards constructed, possible directions discussed

**August**  
 - Marketing options discussed and evaluated in conjunction with product and textile teams

**November**  
 - Final brand direction agreed and brand values recorded formally

**December**  
 - Nomad marketing campaign launched with bass ad campaign to raise awareness

**Photographers** interviewed, in partnership with Designers and in line with product and brand values

**March**  
 - Photo shoot held

**Full** marketing campaign launched

**April**  
 - Corporate literature developed  
 - Marketing campaign developed  
 - Website developed

**3D** marketing materials developed - Stand display, presentation case

