

The Benchmarks winners are leading the way in branding

By **System Administrator** on November 28, 2007

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The announcement of the Benchmarks winners last night marked a huge triumph for branding design (see News Analysis, page 9).

The subtleties of effective branding are sometimes lost on judges charged with merely seeking out creative excellence. Here one piece of work, rather than an entire campaign, can take the honours through the genius of its concept or execution – and judges often single out one item from a collective entry as deserving in its own right.

That is a fantastic way of celebrating creative brilliance and of setting standards, but we know that real life is rarely like that. Branding can be let down by a roll-out that isn't up to the mark or because of a couple of incoherent applications.

The Benchmarks scheme seeks to address these issues by insisting on consistency as a key criterion across various applications. But it goes further than this in winking out designs that meet everyday needs, rather than the exquisite designs adored by designers because they are aimed at them or where the creative team has more leeway than it might have in a wholly commercial environment.

Projects such as Coley Porter Bell's branding for Dylon International, The Partners' enduring relationship with Thrislington Cubicles, and Greenwich Design's work for dustbin manufacturer Garrods of Barking address the mundane in a witty and appropriate way, and these stories can be translated by even the humblest of clients. The message is that design can make a difference, whatever your business.

The ideal situation, of course, is that a winner of a Benchmark award also scores in a 'creative' awards scheme. This is certainly true of Land Securities, deservedly named as our first Client of the Year last night and the instigator of the Cardinal Place branding by GBH, which won on all fronts this year.

Projects in the 2007 Benchmarks book are seen largely by clients. Let us hope that more of them take heed of what their peers have achieved and put greater trust in design.

