

grow



Just Design

Going global and beyond



Taking your brand to the global market is no small feat. It's a journey that requires a clearly defined strategy, a superior offering, a dedicated client and human capital strategy, and beyond that, an addicting desire to do more than the status quo. That last quality is what Just Design CEO, Alastair Haarhoff, possesses. As an inspirational entrepreneur, he likes nothing more than to take risks and pursue opportunities that will lead to fireworks and success.

Where it all began

Just Design was established in 1999 as a South African-based packaging design company, predominantly working in Stellenbosch where the agency was based. A niche agency, Just Design originally focused on servicing British American Tobacco and smaller alcohol clients.

Fast track to 2015, when Alastair decided to go from working for Just Design to owning it and creating a very different sort of design agency.

One that is built on an already strong foundation to speak to different markets, prioritise the client's needs above all else, and break into international territory.

Described by Just Design Managing Director, Vanessa Bosman, as a "typical opportunist" who "wastes no time in leaping in", Alastair immediately got straight to work on his growth plans by breaking into FMCG, pharmaceutical, and luxury brand markets.

The plan behind the plan

Knowing that he wanted to expand into new offerings, markets and take the agency global, Alastair realised that he needed guidance. In 2016, he attended a talk given by Grow at Entrepreneurs' Organisation and subsequently reached out to Grow to find a partner who could help him get Just Design where he wanted it to go. Grow connected him with, a reputable business coach with a background in marketing.

Their new coach quickly got involved in understanding the day-to-day intricacies of Just Design, assessing the agency's client base, targets, processes, and people in order to better partner with Alastair. Together, the two worked to create a 'plan behind the plan', a process that included assessing what was and wasn't working and defining the business' strategy. A particular insight that came out of this was the need for a strong leadership team to free Alastair up to work on the business – not in it – and focus on expanding the company's offering and becoming a globally-led agency.

Explains Alastair, "I was consumed with dealing with every day issues and running the business, which held me back from going after what mattered." And so with his coach, the two started recruiting and coaching a team of like-minded individuals who had the capacity to challenge and support Alastair. In 2012, Vanessa Bosman hired as the Johannesburg Managing Director and in 2018, Franco Raffa was hired as the Stellenbosch Managing Director.

Breaking into branding

As the team pursued different markets, Alastair had to decide whether Just Design would remain packaging specialists or take the plunge and get into branding. Says Alastair, "It's not often that a packaging agency brings in a branding arm. It's a unique combination and one that I intuitively knew would be successful because of our commitment to keep the consumer at the forefront of whatever we design."

The team's genuine desire to find out what matters to their clients is just one facet of their approach. Adds Vanessa, "We actually prefer to call our clients, 'partners', because we invest heavily into the relationship and work incredibly hard to achieve the business's vision, not just the once-off project goal."

Having launched their branding vision, Alastair and his team met regularly with their coach to maintain discipline around the sales pipeline, assess their ongoing goals, and address key areas. During these sessions, the team could make sure they stayed true to course see first-hand the impact that the coaching sessions was having on their progress, and make headway into their global ambitions.



First stop UK, next global domination

In 2018, guided by their coach, the team wisely decided to use an anchor partner, to open doors in international markets and established an office in the UK. Not only were they able to offer extremely competitive rates, being Rand-hedged, but this move allowed them to utilise their 19 years' worth of experience in new markets and build their international reputation.

Having established an office in the UK, the team started exploring new terrain in Europe, the Middle East, and further afield into Africa. Says Alastair, "A close synergy between our existing three studios means that any partner who crosses our doors will benefit from a crossover of ideas, insights, and approaches, with access to our full range of services. This is something that we're in a position to offer as a direct result of the coaching system, sessions, courses, and general support offered by Grow."

Case and point, when Alastair and his team fleshed out their 10 year plan in 2016, they set a goal of winning a pitch against global agencies for an international company. Three years into their strategy and they're already in this exact scenario.

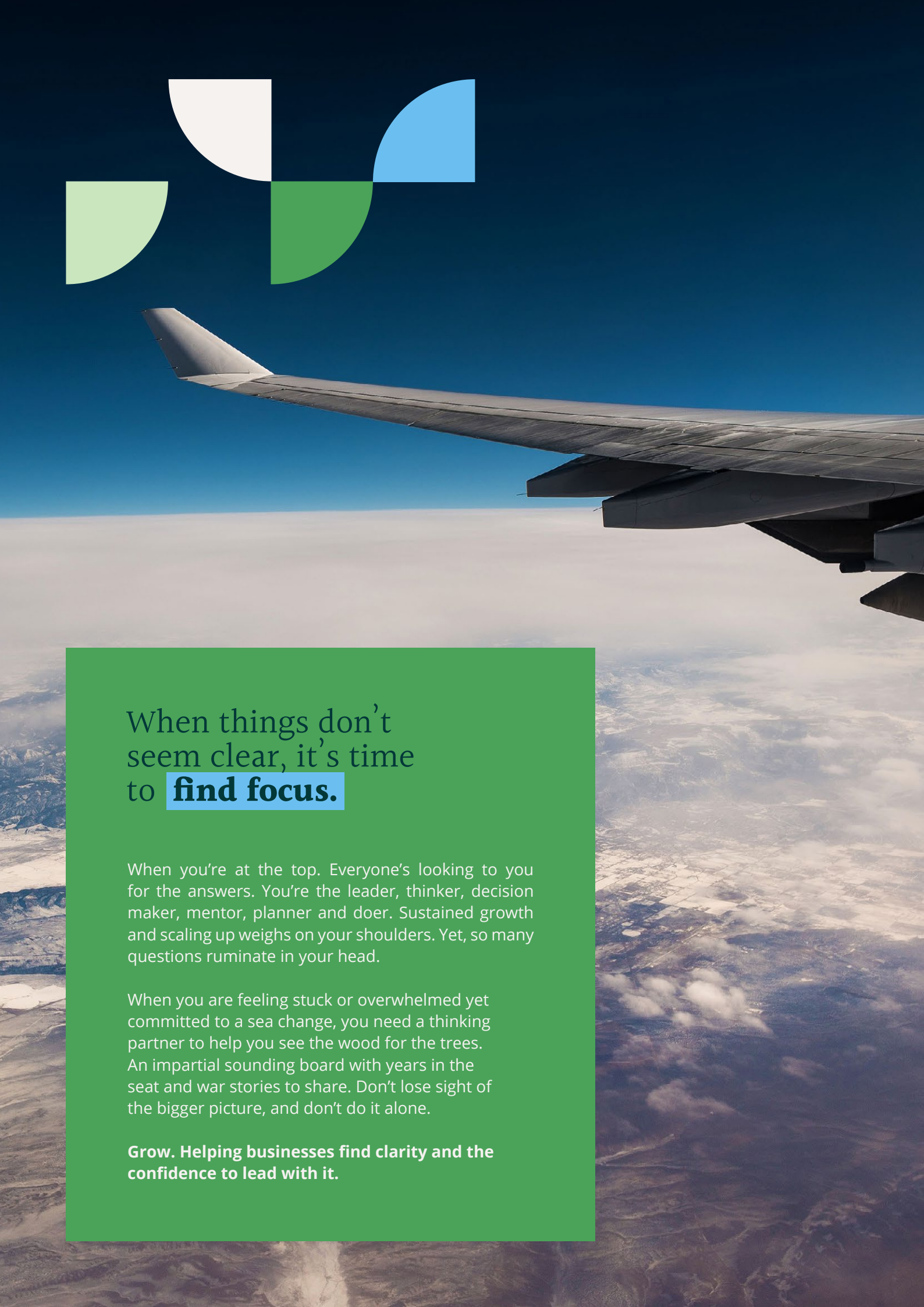

And it hasn't stopped there. Just Design continues to distinguish themselves from their competitors, working on some of the biggest brands, including Coca-Cola, Mondelez, and Unilever.

Says Alastair, "Grow has set us on a path that goes beyond what we thought possible and I've personally learnt so much that I'll use to continue Just Design's success – and any other opportunity that presents itself in the future."



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When things don't seem clear, it's time to **find focus.**

When you're at the top. Everyone's looking to you for the answers. You're the leader, thinker, decision maker, mentor, planner and doer. Sustained growth and scaling up weighs on your shoulders. Yet, so many questions ruminate in your head.

When you are feeling stuck or overwhelmed yet committed to a sea change, you need a thinking partner to help you see the wood for the trees. An impartial sounding board with years in the seat and war stories to share. Don't lose sight of the bigger picture, and don't do it alone.

Grow. Helping businesses find clarity and the confidence to lead with it.



Build your business with **clarity and confidence.**



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