

BRANDING ■ IIT alumnus, NID designer join hands to help companies across sectors turn around, grow **'We look beyond the pretty picture, behind the catchline'**

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MARCH 2

TWO years ago, a packaging machinery manufacturer used to sell its products with a brochure with machine specifications. After all, how remarkable can a machine manufacturer's work be made out to be? Well, a lot as Hemant Karandikar and Falguni Gokhale of brand and design firm Purple Stream found out once they started work on the project.

"We gave them a distinct corporate identity, drew fresh brochures, updated the website, made a new sales pitch. We advised them to show clients the end-product — the pouches (for milk, oil, grain etc) the machine would produce," explains Karandikar. Now, home-grown Nichrome India can even dream of taking on an MNC like Tetra Pak,

thanks to some innovative branding.

"It has helped us to look at ourselves and our positioning. It has helped us realise what our customers want from us," admits Mrunal Joshi, Marketing Services, Nichrome. "We have got a lot of enquiries — and signed up new clients — after the makeover," she points out.

Another happy Purple Stream client is Universal Spices. "We took two concepts from them, for our ready-to-cook masala for the Jain range of foods and one for our traditional pickles," says Dhanyakumar Chordia, MD, Universal Spices. "Both have been very well accepted in the market."

"I have ideas, which Falguni helps to translate visually," points out Karandikar. The strategy appears to have paid off because in a year after its



Hemant & Falguni: What's the good brand?

launch, Purple Stream bagged the prized Pears Junior project of FMCG major Hindustan Lever despite quoting a higher price than the rest of the brand design/strategy pack.

Pointing out that the software industry and the manufacturing sector are beginning to take a keen interest in branding, Karandikar says, "These are greenfield areas...

they have a huge scope to play in the differentiator market. They are beginning to realise that they need a good quality message with a good brand message which will help them protect their value and help them take on the competition."

Purple Stream is working on two software companies' projects — one Indian wanting to go global, the other overseas wanting to come here. "Where we add value is that we can take product from concept to market. That's a new offering... people usually either go to the strategist or the designer or to both separately. We provide both the services. Clients are realising too that just a pretty picture is not enough. You need much more than a catchline to be taken seriously," says Gokhale.

Besides the growing number of enquiries, what makes

Karandikar smile is the fact that he has no bosses. "This job gives me access to a whole lot of industries. I have no bosses, only clients to satisfy, that's a good situation." Gokhale is happy that her designs now have greater meaning with Karandikar's "invaluable inputs".

"I can't draw a line straight," says Karandikar modestly. Modest because this IIT Powai alumnus has had a successful corporate career, having dabbled in research and development, engineering, manufacturing, marketing and sales in companies like Philips, before giving it up to do what he loves doing — strategise to help companies turn around or grow. Along the way, he also found a way out of his poor drawing skills, by joining hands with National Institute of Design expert Gokhale, with more than 15 years of experience.