



Top: Revolution breaks out in 'Customisation'. Above: Boulevards lead to the piazza and zones. Below: A pit-stop team demonstrates 'Efficiency'

Sweet

Cadbury and Trebor Bassett have combined forces. A week before the Cadbury Schweppes businesses became fully integrated, 1,600 staff from across the UK attended an inspirational event at the NEC to learn the new goals and strategy

IT IS, says Andrew Cosslett, the biggest ever such event for Cadbury Schweppes and it is about 'where we want to take our new business and how to get there'.

The group's Cadbury and Trebor Bassett UK confectionery businesses have recently merged, Cosslett is managing director and his words formed part of the opening session of a major event at Birmingham's NEC, held a week before the integration of the two companies was completed.

The event, carrying the deceptively matter-of-fact title of

the Cadbury Trebor Bassett Business Conference 2001, was attended by around 1,600 of the 6,000-strong workforce — taking in a representative mix of management, sales and operational staff — from across the UK.

Its purpose, says Rob Bishop who is media and event production manager for the confectionery leader — all events are produced in-house from the Design Studio in Bournville — was 'to celebrate the launch of the new combined Cadbury Trebor Bassett business and to communicate the new goals and strategy'.

PRODUCTION FACILITIES

The in-house production team for Cadbury Trebor Bassett is based at Bournville and forms part of the Design Studio which carries out work for Cadbury Schweppes on a global basis.

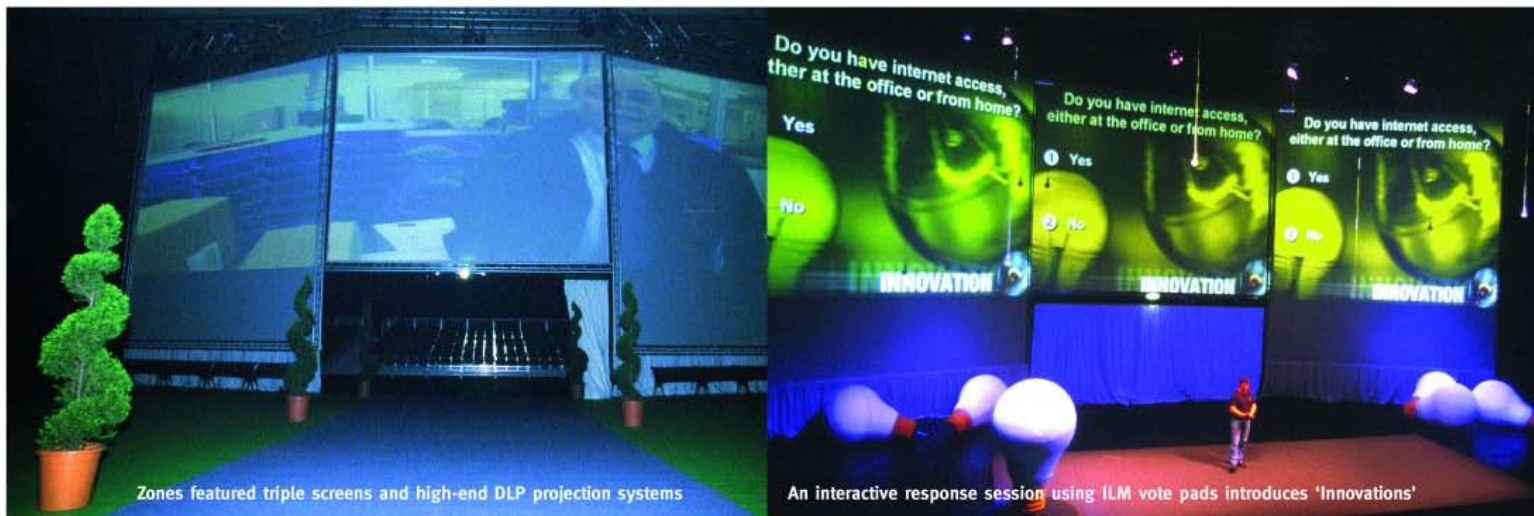
The conference team has a staff of six, and apart from conferences/events is involved in the production of CD-ROMs, 'any kind of presentation', and web sites.

The Cadbury Trebor Bassett event which occupied Hall Four at the NEC involved some three months planning by the conference team.

Other services provided at Bournville include video production, editing facilities based on five Media 100-based non-linear suites, a photographic studio, and a printing department.

The studio also takes on work from outside companies including such household names as Coca Cola and Camelot.





Zones featured triple screens and high-end DLP projection systems

An interactive response session using ILM vote pads introduces 'Innovations'

inspiration

This was effected on a grand scale and with a clear and unambiguous message that was to be imaginatively reiterated and amplified.

The opening presentation brought all 1,600 personnel together (but in five separate groupings identified by colour codings issued on arrival at the NEC) in a theatre area with raked seating and a stage with 24x18ft speaker support screens, served by 10,000 lumen Christie Roadie projectors, to each side of the main presentation area.

Large prompting screens were sited right at the back of the auditorium, a trademark company practice which, says Bishop, 'frees presenters from the lectern. It's so much more natural when you see people walking about the stage. If you get people away from behind the lectern they are far more open and you catch their mannerisms and expressions.'

After a tieless Cosslett (casual dress is also company practice) proved the point, he was joined by Cadbury Schweppes group chief executive officer, John Sunderland in a lead-up to the core message of the day — the new company is to be based on the five cornerstones of 'efficiency', 'core brands', 'availability', 'innovation' and 'customisation'.

PLEASURE DOME

Then came the big surprise. The curtains between the screens drew back and the audience was invited, colour group by colour group, to pass through into a vast 'pleasure dome' area with shrub-lined boulevards, a central 'piazza' surmounted by four 3m diameter circular screens, and five zones, each dedicated to one of the 'cornerstones'. The concept, explains Bishop, combined creative input from the studio with the results of consultancy that had identified the five cornerstones and emphasised 'that as a

business we had to create more moments of pleasure' (the last four words provided the tag line for the event).

Each zone consisted of a theatre large enough to take one colour group at a time. 'There was virtually an identical a-v structure for each zone,' says Bishop, with a triple screen made up of two external 7.5x8m screens and a central 7.5x5.5m screen (groups entered the theatres under the centre screens). Projection was by a mix of high-end machines including Barco ELM R12's, Digital Projection 10gv's and Digital Projection 15sx's.

The screens themselves were Harkness Hall Translite



TECHNICAL STAGING

Technical support in the main auditorium area was provided by Paul Cleaver Productions (PCP) and projection was by Christie Roadies. PCP was also responsible for the piazza area, where Christie projectors served the four 3m diameter screens, and for a separate a-v control area where images from an OB system and four graphics machines could be sent to the main auditorium, the screens on the piazza, and to the zones.

PSL, in yet another major contract completed since its MBO earlier in the year, provided the technical input for the individual zones.

PSL project manager for the event, Ian Worrall, says in understated fashion, 'it was a fairly big stock of projectors there' — which means Barco ELM R12's, and Digital Projection 10gv and 15sx machines. One challenge, he says, was when everyone was outside the zones and could see the video projection on all 15 screens. 'It was not just a question of contending with colour balance on the screens of individual zones but of tackling the job as a whole.'

Individual zones utilised two Betacam players, a computer for PowerPoint and Electrosonic Vector control ('it's a flexible system').

- PSL also provided AV Magazine with the photographs of the zones which appear on these pages and the photographer was David Copeman.

Opposite: The 'Core Brands' zone used an analogy with the music business to underline the critical importance of established lines

Super II's which allowed images projected from inside to be visible outside. When the audience was outside the theatres, a video that had been reversed in the company's Media 100 suites was screened.

Each 'cornerstone' theatre featured a 15-minute 'show' that amplified the message of the opening presentation.

'Efficiency', presented by Formula One pundit Tony Jardine featured a pit crew changing the wheels of a Ferrari. Members of the audience were then called on to form two teams to try it themselves. The message was that the teamwork, efficiency and the need for constant improvement that are critical in Formula One racing are equally important in the wider business world.

'Core Brands' used an analogy with the music industry and featured Nicky Chapman and Nigel Lythgoe of Popstars fame. The presentation demonstrated just how important the big name bands are in generating profit and how marketing is dedicated to these.

'Availability' hinged on a widescreen video demonstrating that in a person's average day there are fewer opportunities to buy the company's products than would be expected. The message was about the necessity to explore new avenues and new availability points for the product lines.

'Innovation' featured Howard Stableford of Tomorrow's World fame. It demonstrated how the soft drinks, ice cream, chewing gum and beer sectors have benefited from innovation and how the confectionery must do likewise.

'Customisation' was based on a Big Brother theme. 'Thought Police' bullied the audience into order ready for a speech from a droning, authoritarian figure on the three



oval 'telescreens' covering an inflexible, dogmatic and bureaucratic approach to customer service. Suddenly, a group of revolutionaries takes over the theatre and screens footage arguing that customers should get a service tailored to meet their individual needs.

Each colour-coded group progressed through the zones in a different sequence so that all completed the tour at the same time before returning to the main auditorium for a final presentation by Cosslett which again spelt out the five cornerstones and, importantly, gave examples of where action was already being taken.

Bishop has already received much positive feedback from attendees and this should escalate when returns from an e-mail questionnaire confirm the effectiveness of the combined power of an imaginative mix of industrial theatre, large-scale a-v and, above all, a clear communications message. □

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