

The Sperm Mascot Idea (July 2006)

My day job finds me running the US branch of Medical Electronic Systems and selling our Automated Sperm Quality Analyzers across the Country. Admittedly it is the sort of job that raises eyebrows when you tell people about it. I have been at it almost 3 years (as of this writing) and in that time period I have personally sold about 75 of our instruments and trained 100's of customers and distributors around the world. We sell our instrument into hospital laboratories and free standing laboratories to assist Medical Technologists in the diagnosis of infertility in couples that are unable to achieve a pregnancy. When a man goes to the doctor to get his sperm checked our machine is what it gets checked on. In my short time working with medical equipment one thing is perfectly clear: This is one **Boring** Ass Industry. It is dry, impersonal, over dressed, and lacks spirit all around. Like most medical devices our product (the SQA-V) and our company (MES) were disappearing in the monotony of the daily routine. The idea for A Sperm mascot came through as an idea to upgrade the MES logo, upgrade my attire on customer visits, and upgrade MES as a company. As part of a greater vision I also hope to see the logo spark change in the industry as a whole. Everything works better when you keep it personal and do it from the heart. I would like to see more companies and individuals start embracing this principal. If MES can light a small "fun fire" with our design, maybe some larger companies and corporations will see the smoke and get a clue. We all have to work, why not make it fun?

Ideas are a great mystery to mankind. Cognitive scientists spend a lot of time hooking people's heads up to EEGs watching for changes in brain activity when great ideas hit. I believe whole heartedly that there are differences to be measured when you are struck with a great idea - but I think they are a symptom of the great idea hitting you, not part of the creation of the idea its self. I think the great ideas come from a place beyond our current awareness - like gifts from Santa Clause. You will be sitting there and it just pops in as if you knew it all along. This is what happened to me with my little Sperm mascot. In all honesty I don't even feel correct in taking credit for his creation knowing intuitively that the idea was given to me as an assignment - the purpose: Make a Happy Sperm Famous!

So the idea for a HAPPY SPERM had landed. I could see it clearly; a little sperm stuck on the end of the MES logo wearing some sun glasses throwing a "thumbs up", acting way to cool. I got some drafts made by a logo design company but none of them quite hit it. I got some advice from a man I trust to make him more of a Happy and Enthusiastic sperm who was looking at the egg with some "Hungry Eyes". This little sperm is not just going to get up in the egg, he is going to love it down and make it scream with pleasure. I set out to achieve the look and feel of "Banjo" in "The Man Who Came to Dinner". In that movie Banjo walks in the front door, sees a stuck up conservative house made, and proceeds to scoop her up right off the floor and romance her down until she is screaming at him. It is a very symbolic exchange in my view, and I wanted that symbology for my little sperm. After some reworking of the logo the little sperm guy finally hit the right frequency. When it did, I just knew it did. I did not have to make excuses for it feeling a little off here, and a little off there, it was all systems go - case closed! A got a name for my little guy: "Welcome", and I paired him up with the current MES Logo. Here is the before and after:



I knew I had something great and I knew our customers (Doctors, Lab Technologists, etc.) would really appreciate the lift they got from the Welcome/MES logo. He was a knockout success from day one. I could not find a person that was not touched and lifted by the little guy. Those that did not rave about him laughed at him. But, it was not that cutting and cruel laughter, but the shy kind of little kid laughter that lifts the heart. There is something about a happy sperm that strikes a chord in people. I enjoyed people's reactions greatly and started incorporating the Welcome/MES logo into my business e-mail signature, letterhead, packing labels, product, and more. Anywhere that the old logo had been the new logo was put. Then other people at MES began doing the same. People were going far out of their way to tell me how much they liked him. I have been to customer sites where the logo has literally been cut out of MES shipping boxes and pasted on lockers. I have given away 100's of stickers (all by request), and I have received many requests for t-shirts.

So, the ride continues. Check the next update to see how the MES logo became Welcome Clothing!

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