



Public summary

# **IMPROVING BRAND RECOGNITION BY CONSISTENTLY REPRESENTING BRAND VALUES IN A TANGIBLE DESIGN**

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Enschede, The Netherlands  
09/01/24

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The importance of branding is already well established for businesses that sell products directly to customers, also called business-to-customer brands (B2C). However, despite the benefits a brand can convey to all stakeholders, many industrial companies, also labelled business-to-business (B2B) companies, are not utilising it. An example of such an industry is business regarding industrial refrigeration. The obstacle that many brands in this industry face is that they produce a component which operates in a system, that is once more operating in an even larger system. These B2B companies are challenged to make their brand visible while being 'hidden' in the system.

SES International B.V. is a company that is affected by this challenge. SES is a company specialised in 'packaging' compressor- and pump systems for industrial applications. Packaging is assembling different components that are required to make a compressor- or pump system for a particular application. SES operates independently and serves its own customers. However, occasionally SES packages products on behalf of a different brand. For example, Howden, a compressor manufacturer. Even though this co-branding strategy has benefits for both brands, it also causes great difficulties. For example, when SES packages products on behalf of a different brand, the most prominent visual elements of the brand, such as its logo, colour palette, or typography are utilised instead of SES's, causing branding for SES to be even more challenging (Figure 1).

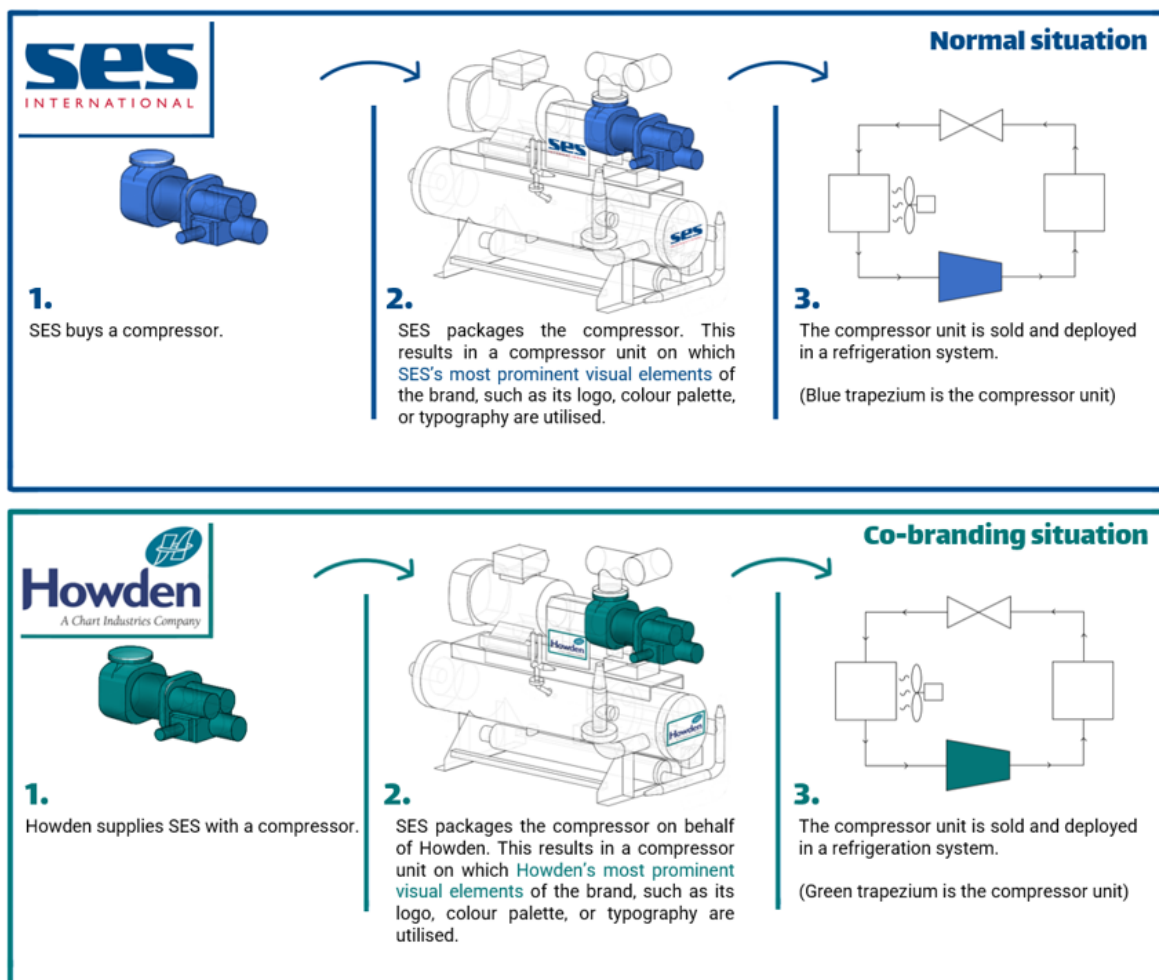


Figure 1: Normal situation vs Co-branding situation. It indicates that in the Co-branding situation, SES packages the compressor on Howden's behalf. Consequently, the most prominent visual elements of Howden are utilised. This makes it unclear how SES's brand can be best represented, especially since it cannot rely on its most prominent visual elements. **The co-brand situation is the situation in this thesis.** (1. Compressor – 2. Compressor unit, entirely assembled by SES – 3. Refrigeration system).

For SES it is unclear how to best represent the brand in the design of the machines, as branding in the industrial refrigeration industry is minimal. This task becomes even more challenging for SES when they only package a product on behalf of another brand. This thesis plays into this challenge by attempting to develop SES into a strong brand through a focus on its core brand values, which causes SES's visual identity to be represented subtly. This results in SES being represented without overpowering the most prominent visual elements of Howden. After achieving the desired outcome, it was applied by redesigning a compressor system (by SES on behalf of Howden) for a trade fair about industrial refrigeration in Madrid.

To gain relevant knowledge, an analysis was performed on branding and the current situation. The findings were assisted by the methods 'Design for values' and 'Making the intangible tangible' and were transformed into the desired outcome; a strategy that decides how and to what extent each brand value is represented. As a result, SES consistently represents its brand values for each product it produces. This consistency will make customers repeatedly encounter the brand values in the same way, which over time makes customers link them with SES. This strategy improves SES's brand recognition, without having to rely on its prominent visual brand elements.

In the end, this desired outcome (the strategy) was applied to redesign the compressor system. The redesign resulted in a compressor system representing the visual identity of both SES and Howden (Figure 2). Howden was represented by its most prominent visual brand elements and SES by visualising its brand values. By consistently performing the strategy, customers can link the brand values to SES, which improves SES's brand recognition, regardless of which brand's most prominent visual elements are used. Nevertheless, mistakes, however small or insignificant, will collectively reduce the overall consistency and reduce the impact of the brand. Finally, the results were discussed and recommendations regarding further development of the strategy were given.

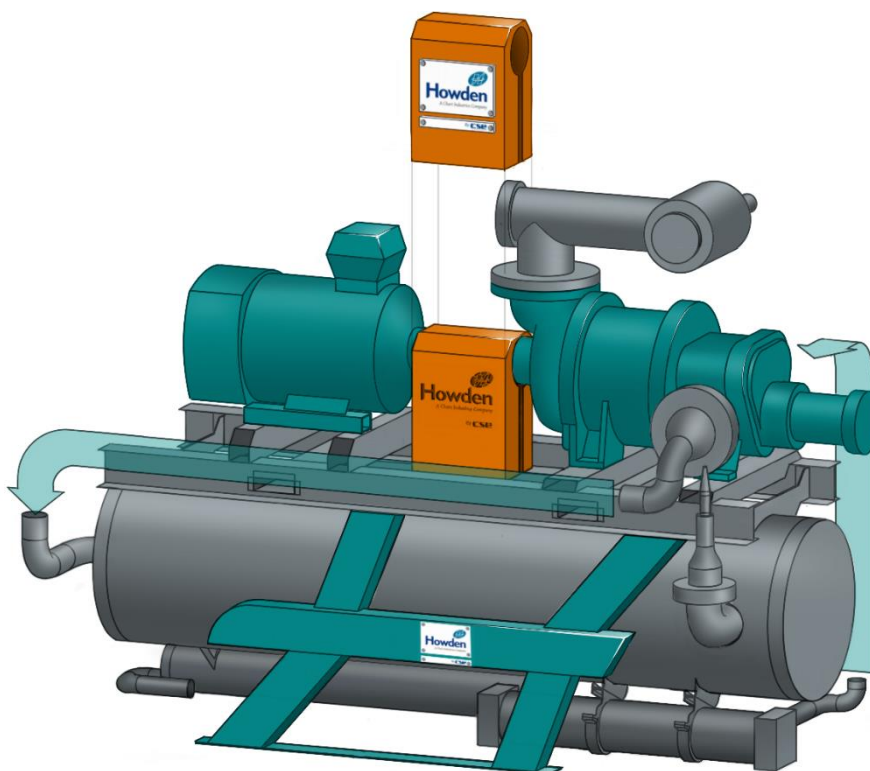


Figure 2: The redesign resulted in a compressor system representing the visual identity of both SES and Howden.