

City Lodge Hotels: Revitalising a South African classic

Since its inception in 1985, City Lodge Hotel Group has grown from a small industry challenger to a classic South African brand, but what did the brand mean to people?



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The challenge: Wherever you go in the country you see their iconic tree logo emblazoned on one of their 53 City Lodge, Town Lodge, Road Lodge or Courtyard hotels. It was becoming increasingly unclear, however, what people thought when they saw that logo. What did the brand mean to them?

City Lodge invented the concept of 'selected services' hotels in South Africa - value-for-money accommodation you can trust. However, with time, competitor hotel groups copied them, and the sector became cluttered, undifferentiated and commoditised. The City Lodge brands were in danger of losing their meaning and having to compete entirely on price. [Yellowwood](#) was called in to redefine, reinvigorate and relaunch their brands.

Intervention

Yellowwood dug deep into the needs, expectations and behaviours of the target markets of each of City Lodge's four brands, with a particular focus on emotional response and associations. This work was complemented by broader category insights and the dynamics of current non-users of the City Lodge group.

On this solid foundation of insight, a brand essence and value propositions were developed for the group, to best connect with their audiences and offer something relevant and valuable.

Yellowwood identified and prioritised what needed to be done to take these brands to market successfully - from services and products, to guest experience and value-adds. This go-to-market strategy also outlined what the most effective messages to deliver are, how to deliver them, and to whom. We developed a high-level scorecard to evaluate communication effectiveness.

Design was a large part of the brand refresh. Yellowwood evolved and modernised the identity of the group and its family of brands. The new look is designed to be crisp, clean and uncluttered, and reflect the brand essence of 'we value what counts' - giving guests more of what they value and less of what they don't.

Results

The new logos, signage, typography and collateral will roll out over the next few months. The hotel group has a fresh colour palette and a revitalised visual language to set it apart from competitors and connect with customers.

Research has indicated that people can intuitively rank the four updated logos by quality and affordability, making it easier to understand the portfolio of offerings and helping customers to find the right brand for their needs. It's design that aims to simplify and bring value propositions to life. "We are very happy with the work Yellowwood has done," says Peter Schoeman, Divisional Director of Sales and Marketing for City Lodge Hotels, "We believe it will help us become more relevant and attractive to our existing guests and to attract new guests who can identify more effectively with our offerings".

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