

Eone Time Creative Brief

Background

Historical Perspective

The first tactile watches were not actually intended for the blind. The first “touch” pocket watches from the early 1800s were developed so the owner could tell time discretely without pulling their watch from their pocket.¹ This was accomplished by touching the hands on the watch and judging their position relative to the winding crown at ‘12.’ The user could also feel the position of the jewels around the perimeter of the case to get a relative understanding for the location of the hands. The watch was intended for the user to check time without being obtrusive. The first design patent on record to use magnets and ball bearings was issued in 1959.²

The Product and the Market

Eone’s central product is called “The Bradley.”³ It is a watch design that communicates time through tactile functions. The design comes in multiple colors (like rose gold and matte black) with limited styles, with the same base design. The name is derived from the paraolympic gold medalist Bradley Snyder, who is the spokesperson for the company.³ Eone designs watches that are “sleek, modern - and humble, inclusive.” During the development stage, the solution to the problems of their past designs was to put the hour indicator on the side of the watch, rather than the front. This helped improve both function and accuracy. It also made simplified the interaction for the user to distinguish between the minute and hour indicators.⁴ The Bradley is the first tactile watch with both indicators, which is one reason why it is suitable for a wide variety of users, both the visually impaired and sighted. Eone claims that their patent is public domain. Eone encourages innovation and collaborative efforts to improve on their design.

Eone’s retailers are scattered across the US. They can be found in the United States in New Jersey, Florida, Kansas, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, and various others, as well as out of country in British Columbia, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, UK, Italy, and Korea. In these areas, the product is currently sold in museum stores, design stores, boutiques, schools for the blind, and optometrist offices.⁴

Competitive Choices

Eone’s competitors range from alternative watches for the blind to trendy styles in wider markets. Designer watches such as The Fifth Watches⁶ and the Almeda Watch⁷ share a minimalist aesthetic. 1:Face⁸ has a similar business model where some proceeds are donated to a cause. The watch company Slow⁹ also challenges our current models of time.

The Bradley is extremely functional. It is durable, discreet (not obtrusive in quiet situations like talking watches), intuitive and does not require braille literacy, which only applies to 30% of the blind population. The titanium minimalism makes it desirable for all audiences of all able-isms.⁴

Eone is one of the most desirable watch for the blind community and has a positive response from users. The high price makes the product less accessible to people from low income backgrounds. It has a high value but is not a market leader in the designer watch group. The brand is not pervasive, however our brand does have a loyal following.

Creative

Eone's logo is minimal, with an elegant modern style. The style of the watch matches this description. The material is titanium and uses ball-bearings through a consistent technique. This style blends into Eone's inclusivity campaign. The company uses videos that breakdown the design intent and background, and how that relates to speaking out against stereotypes and obstacles from disability come from social inequality.

Their initiative to break down barriers ties back in with their less conventional product form, as exemplified by branding campaigns that involve people breaking other timepieces. Some slogans include: "Touch your time. Feel the impact," "... to design beautiful, functional and inclusive products for everyone" and "modern design never felt so good."¹⁰

Audience

Who Are They?

Eone mainly targets 25-45 year old middle to upper middle class professionals. This is reflected in the price range, target audience used in ad campaigns and promotional images. The brand does not have a timeless and traditional style and history that may appeal to older generations above 50. They also target the blind community, particularly young people who want to refine their contemporary, simple and sleek style. Eone's values focus on inclusivity, accessibility, aesthetics, quality, giving back, diversity, sustainability.⁵

Below are some sample reviews Eone has received:

I love how my Bradley watch really considers every detail. The style is beautiful and minimal, and I can use it in almost any setting. At the same time, it's amazing how the company gives back to those in need, and the design and usability is inclusive for all communities. Wearing the watch makes me feel like I'm giving back.¹¹

The watch is so sturdy, and even when I do knock the ball off its runner, it's just a case of shaking my wrist and it popped back in the right spot, which really impressed me. The ball, incidentally is always attached to the runner, so there is no chance of it falling off the face of the watch. I have only been wearing the Bradley for a few days now, but already, I can't imagine not having it on my wrist. Feeling for the ball bearings and working out the time, has become a very natural process to me.¹¹

It is great being able to wear a watch again, particularly one that is universal, in that anyone can wear it, men, women, sighted blind, it doesn't matter. It's not being marketed at any particular group, other than people that want to look stylish. I also love the fact that I can sit in work meetings, at friends houses or just chatting to people in general and discreetly check what the time is, without appearing rude. I have had talking watches and Braille watches over the years, but only for practicality, definitely not for style so the Bradley makes me feel on a par with my sighted friends and colleagues.¹¹

Current Brand Attitudes and Behavior

The brand of Eone is similar to other contemporary watch companies. What makes it stand out is the use of ball bearings and the history and design process of how it was made. This process gives value to the product.

Eone takes pride in being inclusive and accessible to everyone. Although the design is accessible through its use, the actual cost limits its accessibility. Watches range from \$200 - \$400 which limit use for people from low-socio-economic backgrounds.

The company is online. People can order products from their website. The watch is also stocked in store around the world, like boutiques and museum stores. There are also many articles, from Github to the New York Times that feature the company and products.

Below are some customer reviews:

The brand is so inclusive. I love the minimalist style. I get so many complements from friends. The style is unique with the ball bearings that I always get asked about it. I feel like I'm contributing to a movement towards all-inclusive design, something that is important and should be considered in every area of life.¹²

Eone is really such an innovative company. They are able to achieve so much through such a simple and contemporary design. I'm impressed with how the company is breaking down social barriers and helping people consider issues that may not directly affect them. The product is really durable and successful, from style to function it really hits the ball out of the park.¹²

Brand Essence and Personality

Some key values that describe the brand are its simplicity, timelessness; its tactile nature, aesthetic, durability and emphasis on inclusivity.¹⁰

Eone speaks with a professional and distant tone of voice. All of their objects have a clean polish and their brand is very minimalist and on trend. Eone speaks with a combination of serif and sans serif typefaces in order providing a professional polish. This, coupled with a clean aesthetic, also makes the brand feel distant.¹⁰

Considerations

By creating a physical space for their product, Eone faces competition from traditional luxury watch brands such as Tiffany's, Cartier, and Rolex. A similarly priced accessory brand that would be supplementary in the market could be Warby Parker.

The main concern for opening a store would be that there simply wouldn't be enough customers to keep the store economically profitable, compared to Eone's online ordering service. We do not have a diverse enough a product range to continually push product, and it would be difficult to find a centralized location, given our clientele is so scattered.

In order to appeal to existing target audiences, we would need to keep our brand "essence." We will need to close the distance gap and include approachability while maintaining our exclusivity.

As such, our key insights to keep in mind for designing are:

Eone provides a discreet, intuitive and durable sensory experience.

Eone speaks with a stylish, innovative and modernist aesthetic.

Product functionality supports accessibility and inclusivity.

Interaction

One such potential interaction with the new physical space is one based on physical touch. By designing a room that will engage their sense of touch, customers will be able to have an experience mimicing the use of the watch itself.

Desired Brand Attitudes

We want the customers to understand that the Bradley is covetable. As such, it is important for the voice of Eone to shine through. The environment should have a clean polish, just like their advertisements. There is also an element of sophistication present that should be reflected. Despite this, it's important to have some grounding for the narrative, as its durability and utilitarianism should also be communicated.

As Eone themselves stated, "Good design is universal, considering everyone – from all backgrounds and walks of life."¹⁰

Assignment and Objectives

We have been asked to communicate Eone to a diverse audience through a pop-up shop.

The new environment should and increase exposure of our product through a tactile, inclusive experience that provides a taste of Eone.

Some indices of performance can include an increase in sales, number of social media mentions, and increased hits to our site.

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