



“Brand building in any sector is imperative and relevant.”

- John Brash, Founder & CEO, Brash Brands

The real estate sector is extremely competitive in the GCC region and builders are emphasising on the importance of brand building and design to give that edge to their properties. Buyers are therefore attracted by branded real estate giants as they are more trusted or have more credibility, and branded properties fetch more returns on investments for both builders and the buyers. Thus there is tremendous opportunity for branding and design services for real estate in the GCC region. **John Brash, Founder & CEO, Brash Brands** and **Nick Talbot, Global Design and Innovation Head, Tata Elxsi**, share on their recent partnership and the importance of brand building in the GCC industry.

Tata Elxsi and UAE-based Brash Brands announced a major strategic partnership to deliver full service brand consultancy and integrated design services in GCC. What is the nature of this partnership?

Talbot: Tata Elxsi has partnered with Brash to offer brand consultancy and integrated design services in India, GCC and Asian markets. In this tie-up, Tata Elxsi will build Brash's business in India while Brash will

represent Tata Elxsi's design services portfolio in the GCC. The strategic partnership will enable both companies to leverage each other's competencies in both markets – GCC and India. Brash also has a strong presence in the GCC, especially in the hospitality and real estate sectors. While Brash will help create the brand up to the guidelines phase, Tata Elxsi's team will support Brash on the delivery of the applications. It will be across signage and way-finding, experience design, user experience and product design.

As a leading design and technology company, how would you support Brash Brands in this partnership?

Talbot: Tata Elxsi will support Brash Brands in leveraging its strength in the areas of signage and wayfinding, experience design, user experience design and product design. Through this partnership, we will help rebrand the iconic St James' Court Hotel – A Taj Hotel, London. While Brash developed the brand identity and collaterals, we supported them in implementing the signage and way-finding for the luxury hotel.

How will Brash support Tata Elxsi in this partnership?

Brash: We support Tata Elxsi on a strategic and creative level. We start by



assembling a hand-picked team suited for the job. We then gather insights, which in turn help us to unearth the big opportunities for the brand. After evaluating this, we define scenarios and discuss this closely with the client to form a winning idea, which will mobilise the entire team and inspire the creative part of the project. We then create the brand up to the guidelines phase and collaborate with the Tata Elxsi team on the delivery of the applications.

In the partnership, what are the projects both companies together have taken up in the GCC?

Brash: Currently we have not worked on any project for the GCC markets. However, if we come across anything exciting, we surely have the expertise to work through the partnership.

What's unique about the GCC real estate market that the partnership has witnessed. How does the partnership plan to address these?

Brash: The UAE property market crash of 2008, which reverberated across the GCC market, has left a certain amount of cynicism looming over the property market in the region. The current and future state of the market is remarkably positive and shows little signs of stopping with very high-end projects being the focus.

How do you view the real estate scenario in the GCC, and hence the importance of brand building in this scenario?

Talbot: As the GCC market gradually recovers, it is important for a brand to create a respected image in the market. A respected brand image is a builder or developer's most valuable



Nick Talbot, Global Design and Innovation Head, TATA ELXSI



asset. The business of building and selling real estate can be a constant, never-ending struggle against incredible market odds. In this struggle, brand building is an important tool in the builder or developer's arsenal.

Brash: Brand building in any sector is imperative and relevant. This is no different with the GCC real estate scenario, the majority of our clients are in the real estate sector. Through this partnership, we care, not only about changing the landscape and shifting the conversation, but also about making a difference to the GCC. Through this partnership, we are on a mission to inspire our clients and their audiences, this is no different for the real estate market.

As mentioned earlier, Tata Elxsi has expertise in signage and way-finding design which is imperative for developing cities, while we have the expertise in providing Branding solutions. Together this partnership has competencies to cater to both the GCC and Indian markets in the above areas.

