

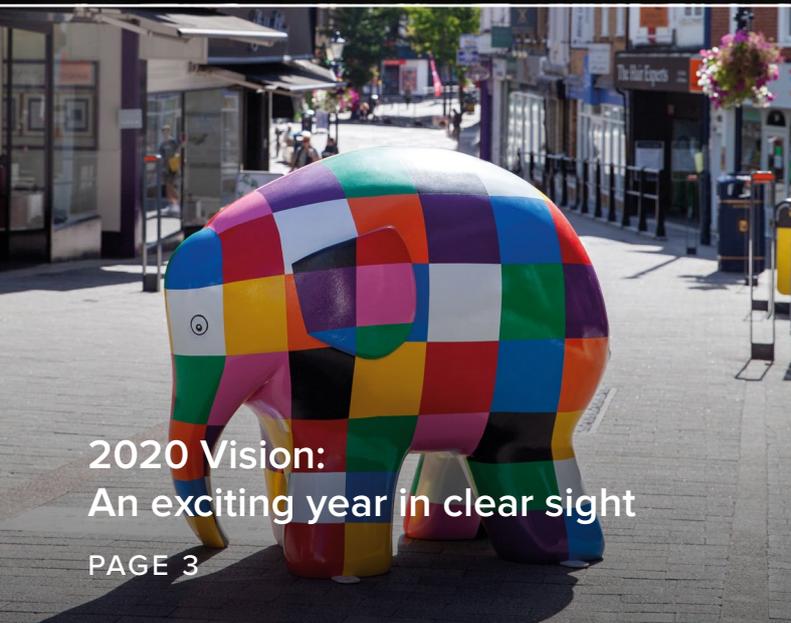
# BUSINESS GROWTH BULLETIN

BRAND SUCCESS WITH BESPOKE PRINTED GRAPHICS



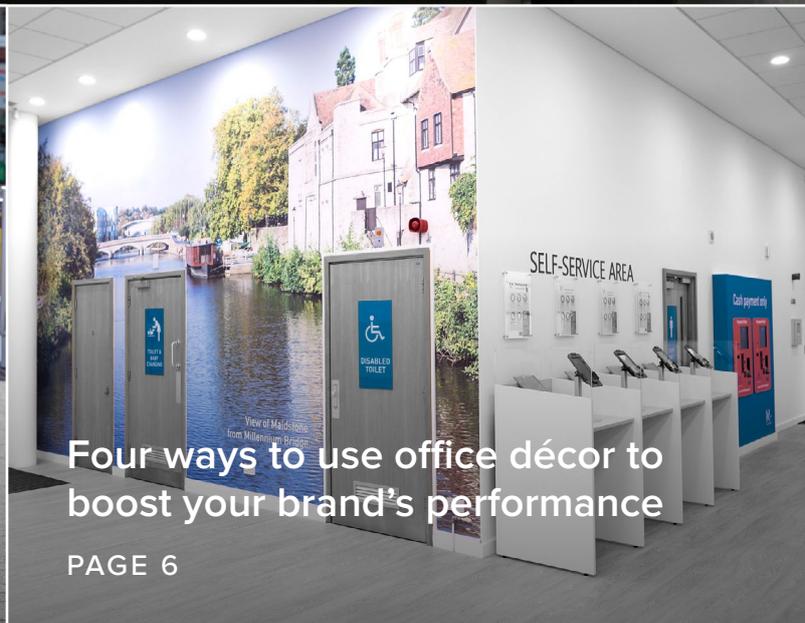
*“A brand that has strong recall, enhancing the reputation of the Merit Group”*

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One Maidstone Remembrance Day artwork on display at The Mall, Maidstone

Full colour print on semi-transparent vinyl creating a stained-glass effect

Creative support, production and installation by BISON



## 2020 Vision: An exciting year in clear sight

As BISON launch into 2020, we've reflected on how proud we are to have been part of our thriving local business community for the last 44 years. Key to our job satisfaction is supporting and connecting with local causes through our charity of the year programme.

Last year we pledged £5,000 to our client and formidable local Kent-based conservation charity, The Big Cat Sanctuary and are thrilled to say we did it! I even took part in a skydive with team members Jenna and Kai – an experience we'll never forget.



BISON Managing Director Mark Bidwell with local artist, author, illustrator and humorist, Graham Clarke

To kickstart the decade, the Heart of Kent Hospice is our chosen Charity of the Year. We are sponsoring an Elmer sculpture this summer, one of a herd of colourful and unique elephants that will lead a trail around Maidstone.

One of the highlights of Elmer's Big Heart of Kent Parade is the fantastic opportunity it presents for Maidstone's family and friends to get active on the trail and spend quality time together.

This is what really made us want to be involved – the parade's values of inclusivity, courage and friendship are ours too, and we knew straight away that we had to be a part of this event. You can find out more about the trail at [www.elmermaidstone.co.uk](http://www.elmermaidstone.co.uk) or to donate, visit our Just Giving page.

BISON was fortunate enough to be a part of another great local project in late 2019. To honour our local troops for Remembrance Sunday, we were approached by One Maidstone Business Improvement District to produce a poignant, high impact piece for the main entrance of The Mall, Maidstone.



We worked closely with One Maidstone to bring their vision to life; printing and installing a thought-provoking, semi-transparent stained-glass effect graphic, designed to instil pride and reflection amongst the public. The Mayor of Maidstone unveiled the display ahead of the Remembrance parade.



The Mayor of Maidstone unveiling the Remembrance Day display at The Mall, Maidstone

There's a lot to look forward to this year, and decade, including England being one of twelve European hosts for Euro 2020. With Wembley hosting the finals of this extra special tournament, it makes me feel optimistic. Few things have the power to bring people together like sport, and when people pull together as a team, as the current England squad do, anything is possible, fingers crossed this year we can finally bring it home. Team is one of our BISON SEVEN core values and as we say – we achieve more together!

I hope you have a prosperous 2020 and BISON look forward to being an extended part of your squad!

Best Wishes,

Mark Bidwell  
Managing Director



[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/bisonforhokh](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/bisonforhokh)



*“We now have a brand that has strong recall, enhancing the reputation of the Merit Group”*

BISON Success Story:  
The Merit Group

WHAT THEY SAY

*“We now have a brand that has strong recall that also retains the identity of each division, enhancing the reputation of the Merit Group.*

*After 30 plus years of the same branding it was understandable that this project was met with some hesitancy from multiple personalities, who are all extremely proud of the Merit heritage. We couldn't be more impressed with how BISON worked with our team, empowering each member, responding to challenges sensitively with compelling rationale.*

*BISON came up with a solution to help our clients reach their required division through a central contact point, creating client awareness of all Merit divisions.*

*BISON continues to provide Merit with fresh and creative solutions to reinforce our unified brand presence. We look forward to working with the team for many years to come.”*



Roy Ashford  
Group Chairman  
The Merit Group

At nearly forty-years young, it's hard to imagine the humble beginnings of the Merit Group when you visit their 300,000 square foot facility in Rochester, Kent. Merit has come a long way since CEO Roy Ashford first started out in his garden shed.

Having built up the multi-division company as a market leading one-of-a-kind business services group with a formidable reputation, the next logical step for Merit Group was to develop an umbrella brand that pulled the complementary services together.

Our mission was to provide clients with a single-entry point without losing any of the separate divisions' identities and branding which reflects Merit's true quality and professionalism, realigning their brand with their market position.

DEFINE

The discovery process was fascinating. The Merit Group has eight divisions headed by sector specialists and ranging from office installation to recruitment services. They all have distinct priorities, personalities and positions within their own marketplaces. It is extremely unusual to bring all division heads into one room, which is what we did for the brand workshop and, using the BISON BRANDING BLUEPRINT to guide a productive discussion. The 'family' environment was clearly apparent as CEO Roy valued input from all division heads.

The session gave us a clear picture of how each division saw itself and wanted to be perceived by its clients.



BEFORE



AFTER



Some division heads felt uncertain about updating the brand as they had concerns about alienating clients, for example, with a different brand name and service, Dash Couriers was understandably cautious. Happily, by the end of the workshop everyone was clear about the vision and excited by how the group could move forward as one. In their own words they were *“the best kept secret – we need to communicate all our services.”*

All agreed that every division needed to retain its own identity whilst also reflecting the service excellence and one-family culture provided by the Merit Group infrastructure and CEO. The solution needed to be adaptable.

CREATE

We inhabited the minds of the Merit Group's wide and varied client base to design customer centric concepts. We proposed featuring the Merit brand name on the HQ signage and generic items such as business cards and folders. This allows for cost-effective print runs and a cohesive umbrella brand identity, while still customising division-specific elements, such as letterheads and promotional items.

We presented different options, including a subtle evolution and modernisation, which stripped the logo back and removed bevels and shadows to make it cleaner. The chosen brand allows the Merit M icon to be a recognisable strong identity that can be easily paired with each division.

MAKE

To roll out a strong, recognisable identity to Merit's forty vehicle fleet with minimal disruption we have updated the vehicles in batches suitable to the client.

We produced signage to deliver a positive user experience. The impact of an overhead illuminated sign, a welcoming monolith and clear wayfinding signage, create a strong first impression and help visitors to orientate themselves. Partnered with visually stimulating indoor graphics continues the client journey.

So Merit could maintain a high-end feel to their business cards, but make a cost saving, we proposed a 'call off' solution. We printed generic artwork for the reverse of the cards and hold them in stock for Merit to customise with the team member's name and division, as required.

We also created a website skin to be hosted on one URL with one central telephone number. The design acts as a client funnel and cross-selling storefront.

WE DELIVERED:

- Quality business stationery - business cards letterheads and compliment slips
- Embossed presentation folders
- Fleet graphics - vans, trucks and lorries
- HQ signage - internal, external and wayfind
- Website skin for all divisions
- Social media graphics & digital templates
- Brand guidelines

ACHIEVE

The roll-out of the new brand has affected how the company now presents and perceives itself. Tangibly, Merit now has an improved look and feel that can be used and recognised on a range of different media, with the added intangible benefits of the divisions coming closer together as a joined up entity that thinks and moves as one.

The brand has been well received by Merit's clients with a positive reaction to the simplified, strong graphic, propelling Merit and its evolving business model into the future, even stronger, even better.





Bespoke printed graphics at the Maidstone Link  
Creative support, production and installation by BISON

## Four ways to use office décor to boost your brand's performance

Stylish branded office décor and signage can have a dramatic effect on business performance because of its influence on team productivity, well-being and the first impressions of clients when they walk through the doors.

**97% OF EMPLOYEES say their workplace is a symbol of whether they are valued by their employer\***

The experience of working in an office that has a contemporary and thoughtful décor can make all the difference to your team's happiness at work. And, because the décor reflects the brand's personality, a smart office space has the double function of immersing employees in the company culture, which should leave them feeling proud to be part of the team and excellent brand ambassadors.

Office décor can also provide reassurance to visitors, whether they're clients, suppliers or job candidates, their experience will

be improved by an impressive space. A visit to your office is another step in their brand journey, so it pays to keep the office presentation consistent with the way the brand conveys itself to the outside world.

Here are our tips on using office décor and signage to your advantage:



### 1. Feature walls

Feature walls transform blank, plain spaces into colourful, branded and professionally defined areas that make a statement.

They can create an ambience with a clean, contemporary design, or reinforce your brand values with inspiring images and quotes that will fit into all kinds of hard-to-fill spaces.

### 2. Pop-up banners

Pop-up banners can create a flexible back-drop to smaller spaces, subtly conceal storage areas or create defined spaces in an open-plan office. The banners also have the versatility to be stored and used at events, functions and exhibitions.

### 3. Coordinated signage

It's possible to extend the impact of a feature wall by carrying the brand throughout the office. This can be done using directional wayfind signage, door signs and accent furniture to name but a few.



Consider what impression you want to make and reflect it in your designs, for example, you might want to create depth using acrylic lettering or make a space 'pop' with specialist finishes.



### 4. Window graphics

Create a sense of privacy while supporting your brand using window graphics to segregate a space, whether it be fully frosted, or your logo in contour cut vinyl.

#### WHAT THEY SAY

*"We chose BISON to create a broad range of internal and external signage, as well as creating key feature and statement walls within the Maidstone Link."*

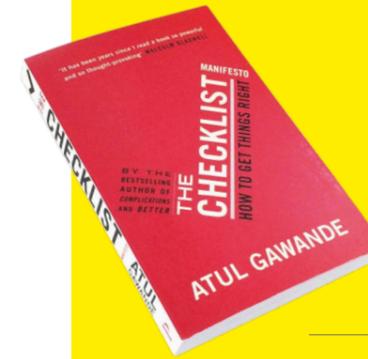
*"This recently refurbished space is home to a variety of key services for residents. The colours, key images and designs used help to create a dynamic and vibrant environment for employees, whilst reflecting a calm and pleasing space in which services could be accessed."*

*"BISON were able to offer advice and solutions to overcome numerous challenges, whilst working to pressing time constraints."*

*"The commitment and dedication to the project from BISON was evident and all work was delivered to an exceptionally high standard with care, respect and attention to detail."*

**Marketing & Communications**  
Maidstone Borough Council

**Discover how office décor can transform your workplace and boost your brand. For an informal chat, call Managing Director Mark Bidewell on 01622 677541 or email [mark@madebybison.co.uk](mailto:mark@madebybison.co.uk).**



**A compass for orientation, no matter how high the stakes**

*The Checklist Manifesto*  
by Atul Gawande

**MARK'S RECOMMENDATION**

### Checklists are a deceptively simple tool that work!

Surgeon turned writer, Atul Gawande, proves this point in his book, *The Checklist Manifesto*. In a series of in-depth tests and studies Gawande demonstrates that, with all things being equal, the person using a checklist will consistently outperform the individual who doesn't.

Gawande documents how he took the checklist idea, first adopted by pilots, into the operating theatre and on into the world's hospitals. He shares his own research and demonstrates how these strategies have been implemented by major players in different industries including, medical, construction, aviation and Formula One.

Of course, the problem with a simple checklist is that professionals may feel they're above them. My favourite example is of the surgeon who refused to use a checklist, claiming they took too long. The same surgeon then required surgery himself and he had a choice of two surgeons – one using a checklist, the other not. Guess which he chose?

#### There are actually two types of checklists: 'Check done' and 'Read do'

Take aviation for example - a 'check done' list is part of a pre-flight procedure: everybody onboard, check, baggage onboard, check etc ...

A 'read do' checklist is the disaster manual Boeing compiled and continually evolve with each incident. An important note in the book is that mistakes are a cheap lesson learned. So, let's imagine a worst-case scenario of a plane cruising at 30,000 feet when one of the engines cuts out or the doors blow off. The crew will consult the manual and follow the corresponding 'read do' checklist.



Watch a short video from the author:

[youtu.be/55Nc8nccPa0](https://youtu.be/55Nc8nccPa0)

I love the story-telling aspect of this book to communicate the message. There are many examples of extraordinary people doing dumb things simply because they had no checklist and were met with an unexpected or fast-moving situation. With a checklist – even just the vital four at the end of a patient's bed – there's always a compass for orientation, no matter how high the stakes.

#### How I've benefited from *The Checklist Manifesto*

- Implemented BISON's successful relocation to our new 350% larger HQ
- Planned a twelve-week marathon programme
- Mapped out jobs, including branding projects, design, print and signage work
- The BISON BLUEPRINT stemmed from this book – our indispensable checklists deliver the best quality and service to maximise the benefits to our clients

#### HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE CHECKLIST

- Keep it short and simple
- Vary the checklist to the task
- Use them as a learning tool or to remind an experienced member of the team
- Test and modify

\*The National Archives - British Council for Offices survey



## FIVE WAYS TO USE THE COLOUR OF THE YEAR IN YOUR MARKETING

This year's dependable versatile shade lends itself so well to print and digital marketing. Here are our top five ideas for using the 2020 Colour of the Year.

1. Feature the shade in images, either as a colour overlay or with photographs, illustrations, textures and patterns that naturally bring the shade to life.
2. Digitally splash the colour on titles, backgrounds, icons, call-to-action-buttons and navigation bars.
3. In print use the shade as an accent colour for textboxes, headlines and flashes.
4. For balance, bring together warm and cool shades with a palette of contrasting and complementary shades.
5. For business cards that draw on the cultural zeitgeist use the Colour of the Year as a font and block colour on the reverse.

## Classic Blue: PANTONE Colour of the Year for 2020

Two colourful decades have passed since colour expert PANTONE first launched its Colour of the Year at the start of the new millennium. This year PANTONE has chosen Classic Blue (19-4052), *"instilling calm, confidence, and connection, this enduring blue hue highlights our desire for a dependable and stable foundation on which to build as we cross the threshold into a new era."*

### The importance of PANTONE Colour of the Year

We are firm PANTONE fans because the universal colour matching system helps us keep our client satisfaction high. You will often hear us talking the language of colour

and encouraging our clients to ensure PANTONE colours are a vital part of their branding process. We can use your PANTONE to consistently produce your printed assets and can give expert advice and solutions to ensure different substrates produce the desired results.

When the experts at The PANTONE Colour Institute speak, the creative community listens. This is because PANTONE boasts an unrivalled knowledge and insight into colour as well as an immense influence on design and consumers.

The chosen reflective blue tone, Classic Blue will feature in new products and marketing communication for the coming twelve months. Be sure to keep an eye out when shopping for your new 2020 wardrobe or even that bold new look for your home ... before you know it, you will see this colour everywhere, it's now even a specially crafted teal!

**Are you consistently communicating your brand? To provide your customers with growth-focussed assets, call us on 01622 677541.**

## Meet the team



**MARK BIDEWELL**  
Managing Director



**JENNA BIDEWELL**  
Client Success Manager



**CHRIS CASS**  
Production Manager



**CLAIRE BROMLEY**  
Client Success Adviser



**MATT BARNES**  
Head of Creative



**KAI BOHANNON**  
Large Format Specialist



**ALEX DRURY**  
Print Finisher



**SHANNON HART**  
Office Administrator

## Come and see us



BISON create and produce innovative and bespoke printed graphics for brand communication. Come and visit us to meet our friendly, dynamic team and to find out how we can help you achieve your growth goals.

To arrange a visit please call Jenna or Claire today on:

**01622 677 541**

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