

# Case Study



# Loving mothers

**BACKGROUND:** Mothers is a classic American hot rod brand of auto care products born in the 1970s California car culture. Although

→ Mothers Protectant and Reflections® sub-brand, before repositioning and rebranding.



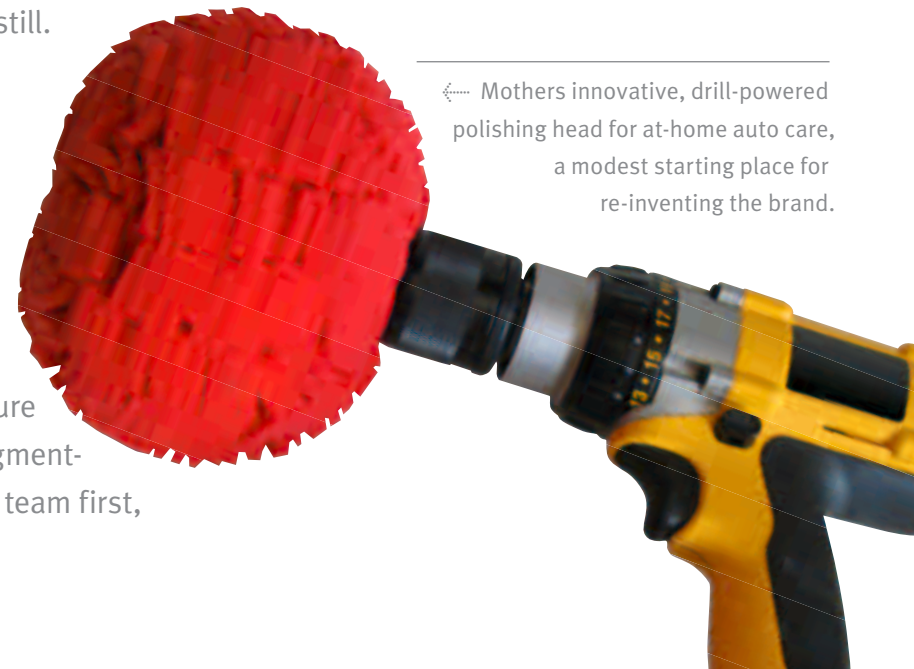
they had achieved a modest 10% annual growth rate, they were regularly outpaced by their competitors. Crowded shelves stunted their potential, and buyers readily admitted they could only open up shelf space for new products. Mothers asked McLean Design to help move the company forward and unstick their fortunes from a dead stand still.

**BUSINESS OBJECTIVE:** Use the introduction of a new power tool polishing head as a catalyst for rebuilding the brand. Introduce custom structures, create clear and concise product descriptors, and design a packaging architecture that trades individual product segmentation for greater brand visibility – team first, players second!

**PROJECT CHALLENGE:** Break through the crowded market. Breathe new life into a stale and inconsistent brand. Re-establish Mothers as a premium choice.

**DESIGN CHALLENGE:** Unite the line. Increase visibility. Get retailers excited.

← Mothers innovative, drill-powered polishing head for at-home auto care, a modest starting place for re-inventing the brand.



## DEVELOPMENT PROCESS ❖❖❖

The McLean Design development process begins with an in-depth look at the market. As brand specialists and dedicated auto-enthusiasts, we were surprised to learn how fragmented the entire category had become. Even premium brands allowed their overall shelf presence to take a back seat to individual product needs – essentially making their brand invisible and product lines nearly unshoppable.

Fortunately, this proved to be the perfect opportunity for Mothers to claim territory on shelf and – most importantly – in the consumer’s heart and mind.

## Brand Strategy

- Take advantage of the visually fragmented category at shelf to re-establish the brand
- Build product lines to gain additional shelf space and tap targeted splinter markets
- Claim color boldly – Red is the ultimate indicator of passion, performance, and impact

## Market Insights

Retailers make room for products that make money. A strong and consistently applied system can create a powerful shelf presence that leads consumers to shop within the brand.

↓ On-shelf fragmentation, as shown in the left mock-up below, proved to be the perfect opening for Mothers to build their brand, create a shoppable shelf set, and claim territory across the board. The right side mock-up demonstrates how a powerful and dynamically applied image affects perception, increases visibility, and drives trial.





## SOLUTION ❖❖❖

Mothers brilliant red color is the beating heart of the brand, indicating a passion for performance.

The new architecture and custom-designed structures allow a large color field for the brand, seamlessly integrating label and package from top to bottom. Clean type and custom photography enhance the consumer's ability to shop within the Mothers brand by literally choosing the result they desire.

With this introduction, the Mothers' sku-per-store ratio more than doubled! Every account bought every sku – stealing shelf space directly from the competition.

And that's just for starters!



↑ Mothers "core" product line up was fragmented and unimpressive, despite their solid reputation. The new line up is ready for its moment in the sun. →

## Mothers Core Line

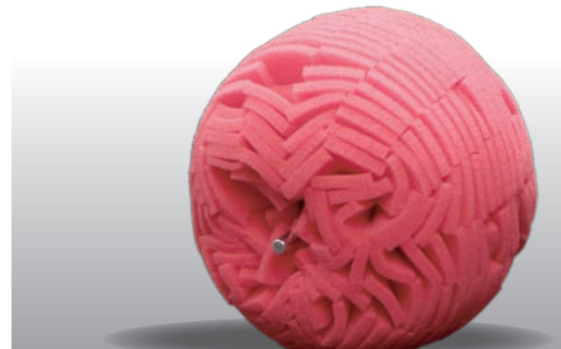
The Mothership, so to speak, reinvigorated, makes a bold claim for number one with proprietary custom-designed structures, solid architecture, and brilliant color. To the cosmetically obsessed consumer, the crisp images of paint and leather – unsullied by graphics – speaks volumes about how Mothers understands and shares their obsession with all things of beauty and power.



## SOLUTION

Building on the strong architecture of the core line, the PowerBall product line-up is distinctly different yet maintains and supports the Mothers brand visual vocabulary.

Product innovation and proprietary packaging help reinforce the idea that Mothers is on the move – and worth the additional shelf space!



↑ From the proposed single-sku Power Ball product, McLean Design conceived and delivered an entire line of supporting products, custom made for power. →

## Mothers Power Line

Based on the single-sku expected by Mothers, McLean Design conceived and delivered a complete line of products supporting the innovative, at-home, power tool concept. Retailers recognized the value and made room for the whole set, placing five new skus instead of one.





## SOLUTION ❖❖❖

Custom-designed proprietary structures and fanatical attention to detail have become the hallmark of the Mothers brand. These extensions push the limits without breaking the mold – all new, but strikingly familiar. Retailers have brought both of these new lines in, tossing out more competitors, and are happily reaping the rewards.

## Redirecting Reflections® & Creating FX® From Scratch

The Mothers Reflections sub-brand was originally aimed at young “tuners,” non-traditional consumers, tricking out their rides. However, we felt that the Reflections name itself was off target, so redirected it toward the luxury-car owner, creating a new product line of premium priced products. And for the young tuners, we created a whole new line-up and tagged it FX, more in line with their video game lifestyles and street level vocabulary.



The original  
Reflections became  
two distinct lines:  
← The luxury brand,  
and the all-new  
street level FX. →

## SOLUTION ❖❖❖

Continued expansion into new segments has helped drive ongoing growth. As part of the overall strategy, Mothers has become a top sponsor of car shows and exhibitions – placing their brand in front of the right audience in a meaningful context.

## California Gold® and Mothers Marine

New products aimed at opportunities in specialty markets keep Mothers driving forward. California Gold is closest to the Mothership, and Mothers Marine is furthest – for the moment. These lines pay close attention to detail, without losing focus on the big picture.



## RESULTS ❖❖❖

Since relaunching the Mothers brand in 2004, the modest 10% annual growth they had experienced over the previous 20 years has skyrocketed to 60%. Each new product they've introduced has been bought – as they've said to us over and over – “every sku at every account.” Currently, Mothers is working to increase production capacity and is moving into overseas markets.

