



Behind the smile Inside TEMPLO's rebrand of GF Smith



GF Smith's new identity by TEMPLO.

Today, one of the UK's most influential companies in the evolving story of paper, GF Smith, unveils a bright, bold and future-facing rebrand that embodies the business' heart-held values and its role in the contemporary creative landscape.

The new brand positioning, architecture and visual identity have been created by the cause-led branding agency TEMPLO after an extensive deep-dive research process designed to explore GF Smith's people, culture, values and purpose and bring them to the forefront of its visual brand expression.

Connecting with a new creative generation

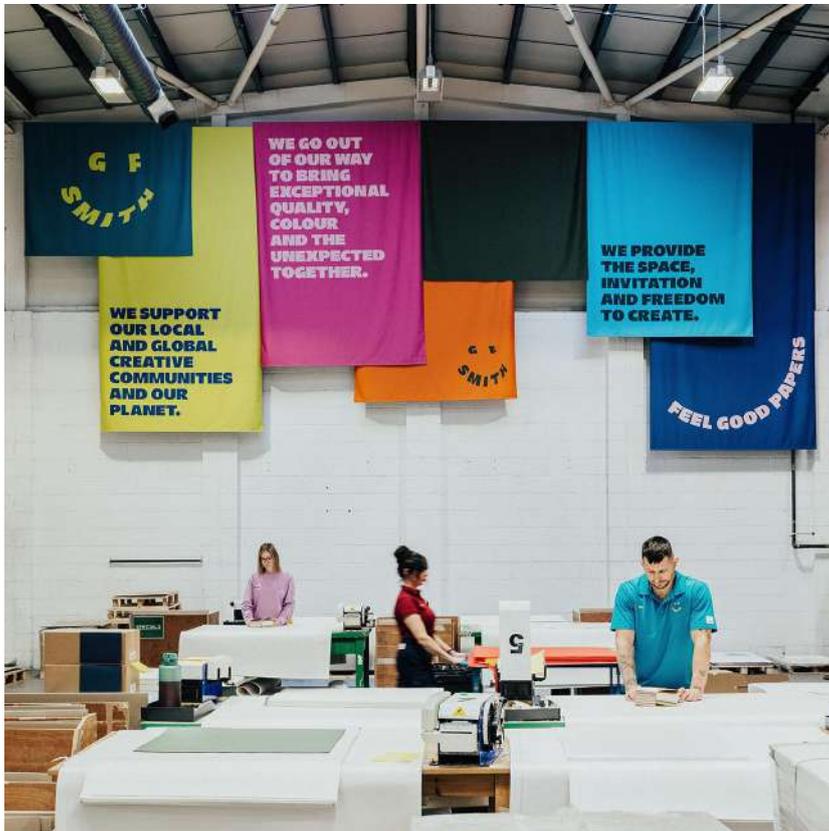
GF Smith's last major branding project took place in 2014. Since then, the business, the creative sector and the wider world have changed significantly. To reflect the shifts in both the business and its market, and align with its plans for international growth, the company needed a rebrand that would not only cut through the noise and connect with its creative-sector audiences, but which would also support its



growing worldwide reach and ambitions, while embodying the character, community, colour and creativity at the company's core.

"We felt that our visual identity, though much loved inside and outside the company and right for GF Smith at the time, no longer reflected who we were as an organisation or as people, and that it was the right time to change, to create a new energy for the brand and, above all else, to look forward to the future."

– Ben Watkinson, Global Brand Director, GF Smith



Prepping for dispatch, inside GF Smith's factory. Photography by Taran Wilkhu.

GF Smith chose to work with TEMPLO because they shared the belief that branding is about much more than just a logo. Cause-led, unconventional and known for their ability to dive deep below the surface to understand and embody a brand's core ideas and values, TEMPLO has previously worked with the likes of the UN, Amnesty International, Climate Change Committee, the V&A, the British Council, Atelier100 and Free Syria's Disappeared.



TEMPLO founders Anoushka Rodda and Pali Palavathanan were inspired by the humanity and warmth of GF Smith, its 'gently radical' spirit, and the company's commitment to environmental and social causes – exemplified by the launch of the GF Smith Charitable Trust.

Together, TEMPLO and GF Smith have evolved and elevated the brand, infusing it with energy, colour, playfulness and positivity.

“By strategically engaging and listening to both internal and external voices, we uncovered the core values of humanity, optimism, creativity, and community that define the GF Smith brand, as well as the gently radical spirit that animates it. The result is a vibrant brand positioning and architecture, and a new visual identity rooted in these principles, which invite audiences to discover the warmth, character, and social conscience that has always been at the heart of GF Smith.”

– Anoushka Rodda, Co-founder and Managing Director, TEMPLO



From left, Pali Palavathanan, Ben Watkinson and Anoushka Rodda. Photography by India Bharadwaj.

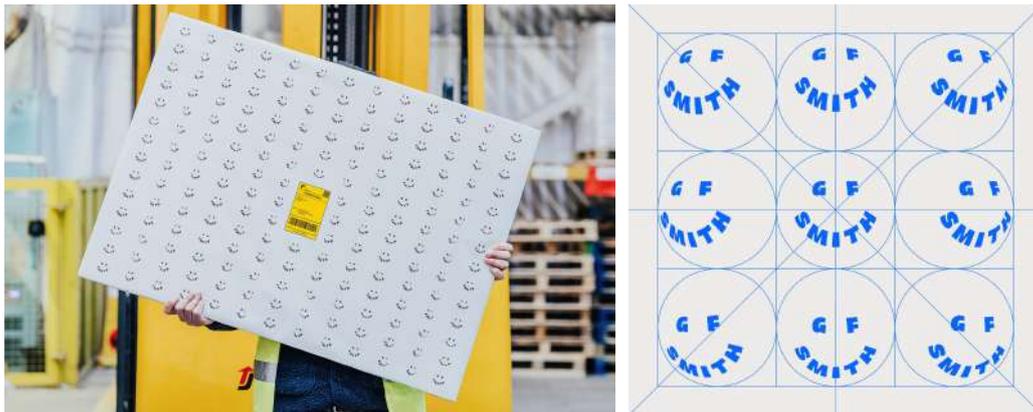


'Why paper?'

Working in close collaboration with the GF Smith team at all levels of the business, TEMPLO's Anoushka Rodda and Pali Palavathanan led the rebrand process, establishing a 'Next Chapter' steering committee and hosting regular all-hands briefings with all employees to steward the development and implementation of the new branding. Together, they identified three truths at the heart of the business that formed the building blocks of the new brand positioning:

1. Why paper? – The tactile pleasure and permanence of paper as a physical material, as opposed to an ephemeral digital product;
2. Why GF Smith paper? – The boundless creative possibilities and vivid colours that define the GF Smith paper collections;
3. Why GF Smith? – The deep sense of community at GF Smith, and its support for its team, its Hull locale, and the creative industries around the world.

Taken together, and encapsulated in the phrase 'GF Smith. Feel good papers', these three elements are captured in the visual device of GF Smith's new omni-directional logo, which transforms the letterforms of the brand name into the eyes and smile of a new wordmark. The arrangement and dimensions of the logo allow it to be deployed at multiple orientations – forming connections to, and relationships with, the content surrounding it. Reactive and dynamic, the new symbol is globally resonant while representing a radical departure for the paper sector, bringing the GF Smith name to life in a bold and gently subversive way.



Omni-directional logo playfully used on ream wrap in GF Smith's Hull factory. Photography by Taran Wilkhu. Graphic still by TEMPLO.



Specimen	Typeface	Weight
	GFS Homie	1400 gsm
	GFS Homie	540 gsm
	GFS Social	270 gsm
	GFS Social	100 gsm

Bespoke sans-serif typeface, GF Smith Homie by Blaze Type.

The logo is supported by bespoke sans-serif typeface, GF Smith Homie by Blaze Type, which is friendly and full of personality, while having the versatility and legibility to suit any number of applications in both digital and print.

“The new brand recognises that the consumer landscape and the international creative community has radically changed in the last 10 years. It pulls back the veneer to expose the human spirit and heart behind the GF Smith brand, and speaks to the whole of the design community, not just long-established studios, but the full spectrum of emerging and aspiring creatives, too.”

– Pali Palavathanan, Co-founder and Creative Director, TEMPLO

A versatile, multi-platform branding system

Supported by a vibrant, high-contrast colour palette drawn directly from the company’s paper collection, the rebrand is designed to support the GF Smith brand architecture at all levels, embracing and consolidating the organisation’s sub brands and multiple services.

These include its iconic coloured paper collection Colorplan, now known as *GF Smith Colorplan*, the fine-art and digital inkjet paper specialist *RK Burt, part of GF Smith* and *GF Smith Colorflute*.



GF Smith Colorflute boxes ingeniously used throughout factory for wayfinding. Left: Taran Wilkhu. Right: India Bharadwaj.



New brand architecture consolidates the organisation's sub brands and multiple services.

The branding also encompasses the new GF Smith Charitable Trust, which has been set up to support access to creative education and creative-industry careers for the community in both GF Smith's home postcode of HU2, the city of Hull, and more widely across the UK. Aiming to break down barriers to opportunity and ensure that



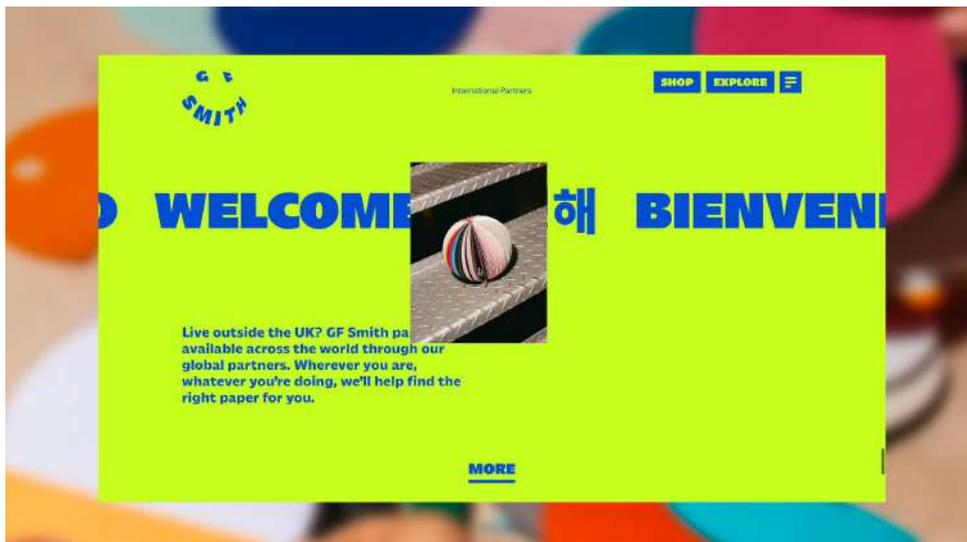
talent and potential are never limited by circumstance. The Charitable Trust formalises GF Smith's long-standing support for aspiring creatives, building on its close relationships with providers of creative education around the country, and the GF Smith Employee Benefit Trust, which has existed since 1977.

Crafting a tactile digital experience

The introduction of GF Smith's new brand coincides with the launch of the brand's new website at gfsmith.com. The new website brings TEMPLO's vision to full immersive life for GF Smith's global community of creatives and clients, while giving the brand a platform for sharing creative content, material insight, industry reflections and visions for the future of both GF Smith and the wider sector.

The core aim of the digital transformation was translating the tactile essence of GF Smith's papers into a captivating online experience. Building on the brand identity created by TEMPLO, Made by ON has pushed the boundaries of digital design to create a site that feels unmistakably GF Smith. Unexpected animations, expressive typography and immersive textures bring the physical qualities of paper to life on screen, while maintaining optimal performance and usability.

Developed by Made by ON in close collaboration with TEMPLO, the new site provides a robust foundation for GF Smith's continuing digital evolution.



Translating the tactile essence of GF Smith's papers into an online experience.



Paper as a portal – GF Smith brand film

The launch of the new rebrand and site will be marked with a film produced by TEMPLO and filmmaker John Ingle, featuring a bespoke score by Fredwave and sculptures by paper artist Nathan Ward. Colourful, abstract and interwoven with captivating animations, the film explores the unique power of creativity as a way to expand our horizons and escape the challenges of our lives, and celebrates paper as the place where every creative journey begins.



Still taken from GF Smith's Portal film. Branding, art direction and production by TEMPLO. Filmmaker is John Ingle, paper sculptures by Nathan Ward, lighting by Leopold Naessens, bespoke score by Fredwave.

Creating merchandise for charity

The new branding will be introduced through a range of merchandise and apparel, including partnerships with sustainable brands Nalgene and Pangaia (Powered by Pangaia), all of which will be available to purchase. The profits from sales will add directly to the GF Smith Charitable Trust pot to support people and organisations across the city of Hull and the UK by providing grants, tools, materials, and training to young individuals and organisations involved in creative education. The proceeds from merchandise will add to the 2% of profits that GF Smith contributes to the Charitable Trust annually.



Through partnerships with sustainable brand Nalgene GF Smith will donate the profit from sales to its Charitable Trust. Photography by India Bharadwaj.

Unexpected material samples and swatches

An exclusive limited-edition semicircle Smile book is in production, alongside a totally new take on the classic paper swatch: the GF Smith Colorplan carabiner. This wearable swatch can be clipped to bags, desks, or clothes, and hung up in studios, making it useful, accessible and versatile – functional as well as fun.



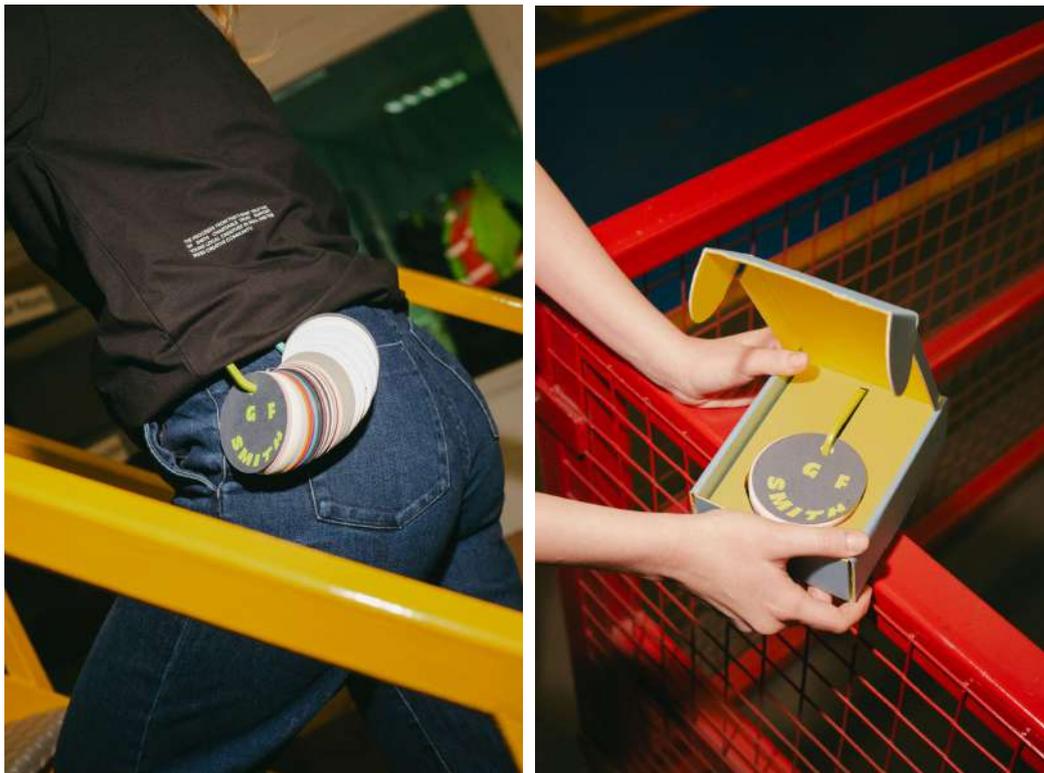
Exclusive, limited-edition semicircle Smile book. Photography by India Bharadwaj.



Featuring 10 brand new colours, the carabiner will showcase the rejuvenated GF Smith Colorplan range, highlighting, in particular, the value of paper as a sustainable material. Two new recycled papers will be featured: 100% recycled Colorplan Extracted, containing a minimum of 25% post-consumer coffee cups, and 50% recycled Colorplan 50/50, designed in two weights for use in packaging.

“We think this is the most accurate, truthful and honest reflection of our people, values and mission – to connect with and inspire the creative community and the next generation of designers, to help people create using one of the world’s oldest and most natural and sustainable materials, and to do all that by being who we are, an organisation that has community and society at its core.”

– Ben Watkinson, Global Brand Director, GF Smith



A take on the classic paper swatch: the GF Smith Colorplan carabiner. Photography by India Bharadwaj.

GF Smith’s new brand will launch with a series of events in London, Manchester and Glasgow, and a programme of international events in early 2025.



“As GF Smith continues to lead the UK’s premium paper market and grow internationally, this new identity will play an essential role in extending our global reach and sharing our love for paper with new creative audiences around the world.”

– Gareth Sheekey, Managing Director, GF Smith



Façade of GF Smith’s location in Hull. Photography by Taran Wilkhu.



Notes for editors

For more information about GF Smith and TEMPLO, high-res imagery and interviews with the team, contact gfsmith@zetteler.co.uk.

GF Smith

GF Smith works in partnership with brands, creatives, designers and specialists across the globe to source, curate and supply the world's finest paper as the foundation for those that seek to create.

As an independent business committed to community, colour and creativity, it is known for its exceptional range of creative papers, technical expertise, specialist services and warm, friendly approach.

gfsmith.com

@gfsmithpapers

GF Smith Charitable Trust

Every year, GF Smith donates 2% of their profits to the GF Smith Charitable Trust. This funding is then distributed through grants or practical resources. People and organisations are invited to apply for funding for projects, arts education programmes, cultural events, and opportunities. This could include anything from transport for a workshop visit to purchasing specialist equipment.

Through the Charitable Trust, GF Smith aims to break down barriers to opportunity and ensure that talent and potential are never limited by circumstance. The Trust will:

- Support people and organisations in GF Smith's home postcode area of HU2
- More widely, support people and organisations across the city of Hull
- Provide grants, tools, materials, and training to young individuals and organisations involved in creative education throughout the United Kingdom in the graphic design or visual arts sectors.

TEMPLO

TEMPLO is a cause-led branding and communications agency committed to using the positive power of design for social change. Founded by Anoushka Rodda and Pali Palavathanan, TEMPLO works in close collaboration and co-creation with chosen clients to deliver authentic, attention-seeking and impactful communications.



For more than a decade, it has partnered with the United Nations, Climate Change Committee, Free Syria's Disappeared, Amnesty International, V&A and British Council to tackle issues across climate change, human rights and community empowerment.

TEMPLO creates work that stands out and stands for something.

templo.co.uk

@t_e_m_p_l_o

Made by ON

Made by ON is a creative technology consultancy dedicated to crafting purposeful digital experiences – from marketing sites and ecommerce platforms to applications and digital tools – that deliver real-world value and redefine the art of the possible. Guided by a belief in the transformative power of creative technology, Made by ON empowers its clients, partners, and teams to shape the future and create lasting impact.

Trusted by global powerhouses including Estée Lauder, Fondation Chanel, Greenpeace, H&M, Intuit, Koto, Live Nation, Pentagram, Porto Rocha, and Trivago, the consultancy fosters long-term partnerships to deliver high-impact digital solutions that elevate brands and inspire growth.

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