

Best of the rest

Previous winners

- 2007**
Landor
- 2006**
Wolff Olins
- 2005**
Landor
- 2004**
Williams Murray
Hamm

The Partners has been awarded the runners-up spot for the second year running. The WPP-owned agency is enjoying a period of success, exemplified by its involvement in the launch of the BBC's phenomenally successful video-on-demand service, iPlayer, in January. The Partners was recruited by the BBC to help position the new brand, from which 100m downloads were made in its first six months.

The judges noted several high-profile projects, including the agency's cover design for the new James Bond novel *Devil May Care* by Sebastian Faulks. It has also carried out significant brand identity work for global financial business Deloitte, hotel chain Hilton and famed London hotel The Connaught.

The Partners bucked a slow market by posting 14.7% year-on-year revenue growth in the first half of 2008. So far this year it can also boast a 78% new business pitch/win ratio and has added several major clients, including HSBC, eBay and insurance brand

Aviva. In the case of the latter, The Partners is collaborating with Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO on a major global campaign launching at the end of this month.

While the opening of Heathrow Terminal 5 proved a debacle for British Airways, third-placed **Fitch** will be content with its contribution. The agency designed a flagship retail outlet at the terminal for Harrods and delivered three individual projects for consumer electronics retailer DSGi Group.

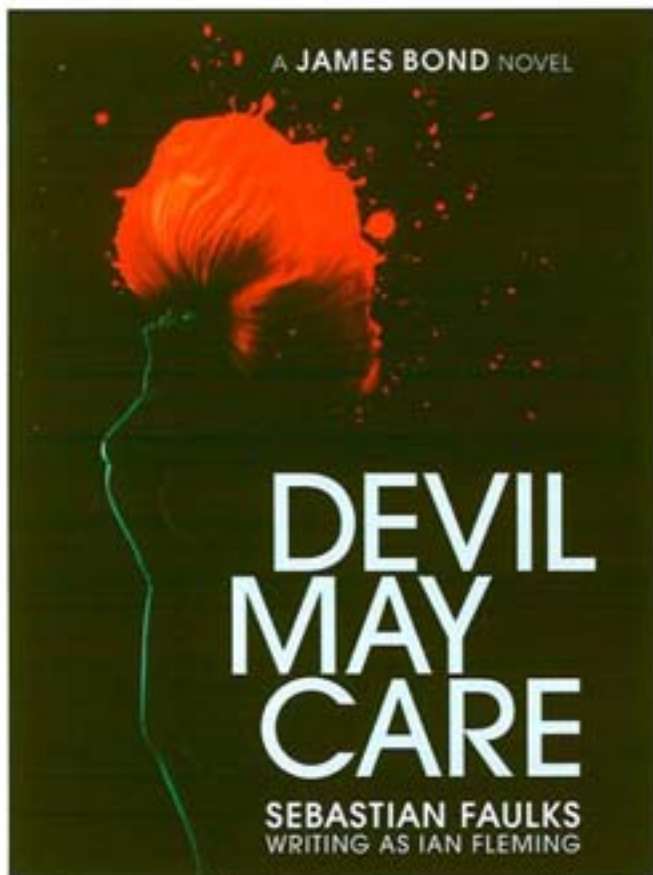
Although at 50% Fitch's pitch success rate may not be as impressive as The Partners', the agency has nonetheless added some stellar clients to its portfolio. Not only was it added to the London 2012 Games design agency roster, but it also started work on projects for Tesco, Sony and Dell.

Long-term clients now account for 60% of the agency's revenues. For instance, it contributed to the design of Marks & Spencer's new store at the Westfield shopping complex in West London and delivered the

first in-store promotional campaign for Nokia. Its rebranding work with HiQ, the Goodyear Dunlop-owned car-tyre retailer and fitter, resulted in a 30% boost to retail sales and 14% increase in customer footfall.

Meanwhile, on the road to recovery after a tough couple of years, **The Brand Union** has been earmarked by the judges as one to watch in 2009. The agency strengthened its management team at the end of 2007, including the promotion of client services director Simon Bailey to managing director, and has added high-profile brands to its portfolio, including Barclaycard, Reckitt Benckiser and Canon.

Barclaycard briefed The Brand Union to create a fresh visual identity to help give the business a wider international appeal. The launch of the logo was timed to coincide with a new marketing strategy emphasising the brand as a payment provider rather than a credit-card brand. If the agency can continue to build on this platform, it will be a serious contender next year. ■



The Partners' cover design for the latest Bond novel (above left) and revamp of The Connaught (above right); The Brand Union's visual identity for Barclaycard (above)