

Before: RealKidz by Doug S.

Merrill Guerra knew that some people don't like shopping for clothes.

She knew this first hand, based on her own frustrations trying to find clothes for her own plus-size daughter. And, when Guerra shared her frustration with other mothers, she knew she wasn't alone.

As a business-school student at the University of Michigan, Guerra also knew she had an idea for a new business. That sums up the concept and birth of RealKidz, "the first company," according to the company's Web site, "to provide a complete line of clothing to plus-size girls between the ages of 5-12, coupled with an online social network for the parents of these children to help them support their daughters and make healthy lifestyle choices for their families."

To create a brand identity, Guerra turned to Ann Arbor-based Pryor Design. The agency created "an energetic and uplifting brand that inspires well beyond clothing," said Scott Pryor, the agency's Graphic Designer and Principal, "to become a destination for kids and parents alike.

"The result was a simple, modular brand system with a distinctively uplifting feel."

Pryor picked a relatively new font——Bryant——for the brand's wordmark ...and applied it everywhere else, from the copy on the new Web site to hangtags and the company's stationery. "It's a fresh, approachable and adaptable type," he explained, "with six different

After: RealKidz by Eve

Nowhere is the anxiety associated with being on the far end of society's body-image spectrum more pronounced than in adolescence. That's why Merrill Guerra, founder of RealKidz Clothing in Ypsilanti, Mich., turned to Scott Pryor of Ann Arbor's Pryor Design to help form a brand identity for her line of clothing for girls who don't fit the petite pop star wardrobe——literally. "Merrill really hit it," Pryor says of Guerra's solution born of her quest for age-appropriate fashion for her own daughter.

Using Guerra's original tagline, "Life styles for every body," Pryor set out to do "anything we could to make this an inspiring, youthful and uplifting brand... custom tailored just for them." In this case, "them" refers to young ladies whose fashion options are too often limited because of their body size and shape. To this end, Pryor developed messaging——seen throughout the RealKidz Web site and on its in-store signage——designed to empower its young clientele, juxtaposed with color and black-and-white photography of real girls completely at ease in their RealKidz attire. "Finally... a line of clothing that's as real as me.' Our goal was to really be immediate with the tone of voice and how the photography is presented."

Unifying these positive messages and photographic images is one element that runs consistently throughout all RealKidz media: an artifact that Pryor describes as "between an asterisk and a flower. It's a neat little energy burst with a life of its own." This energy extends to both kids and their parents, including

weights.” He also came up with the comfortably fitting tag line: “Life styles for every body.”

The mark was designed in all lowercase, reversed in white against a vibrantly colored tonal box. The “a” in “real” stacks over and dots the “i” in “kidz.” Inside the “a,” there’s an asterisk-like mark that Pryor modularized and applied (often in a tonal box) to clothing, hangtags, and elsewhere.

To some, this feature might be a flower, Pryor offered. To others, maybe, an open-to-interpretation thought bubble. Like the type and yellow-cyan-magenta-chartreuse palette, it’s meant to be uplifting, friendly and kid-centric.

“It’s not too deep,” Pryor said, referring to the brand and reminding moms and kids that it’s possible to have a little fun...even when you’re shopping for clothes.

Pryor himself. “For kids, it’s so fresh and youthful, and the same things work with moms. If it’s really great for my kids, I see it as well.”

Besides the Web site, Pryor also designed stationery, business cards, in-store signage (“brand panels” that could also double as magazine ads) and hang tags emblazoned with affirming mantras. Even the bright color scheme—vibrant magenta, yellow, chartreuse and cyan—seems infused with positive feeling. But by using the Bryant typeface, Pryor indeed kept things real—and simple. “A natural typeface [for such a campaign] would be a curlicue, but we wanted to let the other elements come through,” he says. “Fun, rounded and approachable; clean and simple. They all fit together in the scheme—font, colors, rounded building blocks across the board.”

Pryor’s “building blocks” approach imposes order on a growing brand. “We’ve developed enough colors that we could define something new for a [proposed] boys’ line,” he says. “We can modify the logo to be more gender-specific. The building blocks are built... to be kind of a mosaic, in a simple but graphic way. We felt we could evolve it.”

This evolution, however far-reaching, never strays too far from its roots: the need for growing girls to be listened to, understood and affirmed. The slogans “work on multiple levels,” Pryor says. “*I am real*. It’s a thought bubble. Like the clothes talking—as well as the person.”