



# Vtech and AT&T

## A heritage brand finds a new audience

### Brief

VTech is one of the largest suppliers of corded and cordless phones in North America and a leading supplier of electronic learning products in North America and Europe. In 2000, VTech acquired the rights to use the AT&T brand for its wireline telephony products, but until 2002 the question of how to evolve its product identity had been largely unresolved. VTech was keen to leverage the AT&T brand to take on Panasonic, the market leader in the cordless telephone sector, by introducing an entirely new range of ten phones - the E-Series.

VTech turned to its long-standing product design partner, PDD, to create a distinctive but coherent style for each product in the range, focusing on consistency, quality of finish and brand identity. Each phone had to meet the needs of a specific market segment. As such, the project also required detailed analysis of the various profiles that make up the proposed customer base.

### Approach

PDD began by mapping the profiles of VTech customers to establish the key traits and differentiators that would influence the ultimate design of each phone in the range. In addition, AT&T's brand values were defined to uncover the familiar visual cues that would help to tie the phones together under a single brand language. By drawing on AT&T's visual heritage, PDD could ensure that the new range would stand up to competitive products, without directly competing for market share with VTech's other phones.

PDD's understanding both of the competitive space and VTech's plans for the ongoing development of the AT&T brand were crucial factors in shaping the overall design of the range. This approach ensured that the designs did not work in isolation, but as an extension of the values and identities of the AT&T brand and VTech.

The international project involved collaboration between PDD in the UK, VTech's AT&T brand marketing and product management teams in the US, and VTech's mechanical engineering department in Hong Kong. Using these time zones to its advantage, PDD led a round the clock rapid development program to drive all twelve concepts through the industrial design process. This approach enabled PDD to develop the E-Series from visual language definition and initial concepts to 3D CAD ID databases in approximately four months.

### Result

The finished range defines a new visual brand language that appeals to a more traditional market, with classic styling cues that echo the values of the AT&T brand. The E-Series was launched at the Consumer Electronics Show in America and was immediately snapped up by leading US retailers, and has been well received by US consumers.



*"We selected PDD for their proven history in the US telephony marketplace, flexibility to work closely with our internal resources and their capability to encompass the large scale of the project...the new designs represent the AT&T brand in an updated way that provide appeal across market segments."*

Jane Donnelly, Product Line Director, AT&T

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