

# Amana



*A Fusion of Science, Experience, and Design.*



## The Challenge:

Amana came to RKS with an unusual situation. Their Washer/Dryer line was achieving lackluster market acceptance and was losing market share although they had built a quality product. Amana tested the product line against the competitors and found themselves in worse shape than was expected—the products were barely worthy of consumer response. Simply put, the consumers that were tested didn't consider that the Amanas were even in the same league as their supposed contemporaries. Amana's CEO decided to engage RKS Design to leverage the analysis done by the Boston Consulting Group and DDB Needham and, most importantly, to utilize Psycho-Aesthetics to ascertain and address the product's deficiencies.



## The Process:

Based on our Psycho-Aesthetics analysis, Amana was able to make tremendous inroads in the utilization of design as a strategic weapon. As we collaborated with the other teams at Amana, we found that the Cost of Goods was extremely high and that the product weighed approximately 15 pounds more than the competition. Although it was a more durable and better-built machine at a more affordable price, it was not selling and the brand perception was very low.

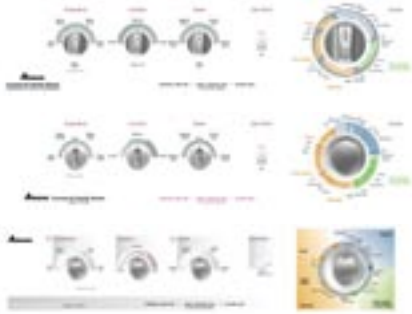


RKS started by mapping out the competitive landscape on our Psycho-Aesthetic maps which revealed that at all stages of the consumers interaction, Amana was by far the worst of class—the key attractors, the perception of the products, the user interaction, and the feedback were all negative. The washer and dryer did not engage or attract consumers and we could see the negative quantitative difference it made in sales by analyzing the competition.

As part of our mapping process and in conjunction with our cultural anthropologists, RKS Design interviewed users and reviewed the environments in which these products resided. 'Day in the life' scenarios were established to create storyboards for specific consumer segments. Then profiles and personalities were established for these segments.

We had key findings that these purchase decisions were primarily a female decision with a male validation of the mechanical fitness and durability within the traditional family setting.





During our assessment phase we were able to extrapolate key points through our Psycho-Aesthetic SWOT analysis by which we rated and mapped the key interaction events: purchases, consumer's perceived needs, their tastes, touch points, and the product's relevance to their lives.

The next stage was to develop a manifestation of the key attributes we identified and create a story line for the consumer to follow: attract, engage and adopt.

During the development and ongoing continual market testing, we were able to raise the consumer's perceptions by addressing the key impressions unveiled through our mapping, profiling, and story-boarding phases—during which we conceived and hypothesized scenarios that would evolve the product line upward on the perception ladder. The process by which consumers search for products was found to be as we had ascertained—they scan the room looking for the appropriate solutions, one that positively differentiates itself from the field and then leads them through the key benefits, key points of differentiation and creates positive affirmations through the critical touch points.

The graphics lead the user, the colors reflect freshness and water, the critical touch points of the controls are soft centered surfaces with clean polished surfaces that compel consumer to “reach out and touch,” creating perceptions of tactile affirmations and engaging friendliness.



## The Result:

As we tested our design concepts against the Psycho-Aesthetics maps designed to follow the Hero's Journey, we found that we could, in fact, not only move up the ladder, we could increase perceived value so much so that Amana could raise the retail price point of the Washer/Dryer 25% (an incredible \$100) while only increasing their Cost of Goods by 30 cents!

RKS Design's direct impact to Amana:

- \$20 million in new, realized profits
- Increased market penetration
- New channels opened up
- New points of sales
- Enhanced brand perception

