



LÜSÜ  
inclusive sports

The  
Engine  
Room®

**Submission title:**

LUSU Naming and Branding

**Client:** LUSU Sports Ltd

**Design consultancy:** The Engine Room

**Submission date:** November 2022

For publication

[engineroomdesign.com](http://engineroomdesign.com)



## Executive Summary

**Lou Assouin and Sue Morrison are passionate about inclusivity in sports for children and young people with disabilities.**

Since 2006, they have been working together to deliver coaching and support to these young people in their homes, in sports venues and in schools.

According to Scope, the disability equality charity in England and Wales, **9% of children in the UK are disabled. This equates to approximately 1.2million children.** It is often the case that many of these children are not fully included in physical education, which detrimentally affects their physical and mental wellbeing and can lead to loneliness and feelings of 'being left out' with no one to talk to. Sport and physical activity contribute to a greater sense of belonging and independence, which in turn positively affects physical and mental health.

When we started working with Lou and Sue, they were working with children in around 20 schools between them, but they were at capacity and wanted to do more. They were struggling to extend their reach as two women working together, with a small website branded "2bactive".

To achieve scale and to instigate wider behavioural change, they needed to expand their reach and train the trainers. They concluded that a professionally designed brand might give them the presence they needed to gain credibility and traction in the market.

**At the outset of this brand design project, they set a number of objectives.**

1. To work with **50 schools** in England to increase the number of sports coaches and sports teachers trained in teaching children with disabilities in a truly inclusive way.
2. To raise awareness with the **LTA (Lawn Tennis Association)** of their offer, as a route to market in order to achieve scale.
3. To increase their exposure to children with disabilities to **more than 500 children.**

According to BESA (British Educational Suppliers Association) there are currently 32,163 schools in the UK. In relation to the size of the market, the targets as outlined in the objectives above were small, but in relation to the capacity of two individuals, the targets were extremely stretching and highly ambitious.

**The business was renamed and rebranded as LUSU, a nice play on the founders' names, but with a more meaningful undertone: "Learning United, Sports Unlimited".**



## Executive Summary

Since the brand's launch, Lou and Sue have significantly exceeded all of their objectives and achieved far beyond their expectations. In doing so, they have made a phenomenal difference to the lives of children and young people with disabilities and their families.

Results are as follows:

### Objective 1

To work with 50 schools in England to increase the number of sports coaches and sports teachers trained in teaching children with disabilities in a truly inclusive way.

Between 2017 and 2022,

**LUSU have worked with 375 schools across the UK, exceeding their target of 50 schools by 650%.**

In doing so, they have reached 1125 trainers in disability sports coaching, educating teachers, coaches and teaching assistants to deliver sport inclusively.



**375**  
SCHOOLS

### Objective 2

To raise awareness with the LTA (Lawn Tennis Association) of their offer, as a route to market in order to achieve scale.

The LUSU brand now sits on the LTA website as a partner of the organisation, alongside other known, established brands such as Sense, Dunlop and Deloitte.

**LUSU is officially named as the LTA's partner in the delivery of both visually impaired tennis coaching and learning disability tennis.**

LUSU have also been commissioned to create a module on disability tennis for the LTA Level 2 coaching programme and this module is now delivered on day 4 of the LTA's programme. LUSU are also now the supplier of the visually impaired sound tennis ball which is available on the LTA website. The relationship with the LTA has led to other key, high profile relationships and partnerships with brands including Mencap, Sense, Dan Maskell and Natspec Games.



### Objective 3

To increase their exposure to children with disabilities to more than 500 children.

Post rebrand, LUSU have increased their reach to

**over 792 children, exceeding their objective by 58%.**

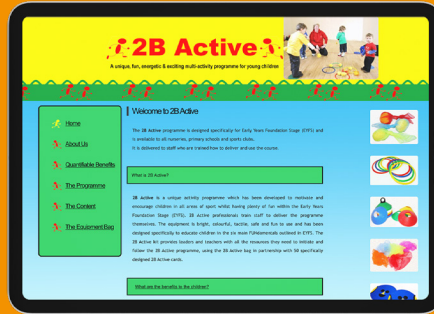


**>792**  
CHILDREN

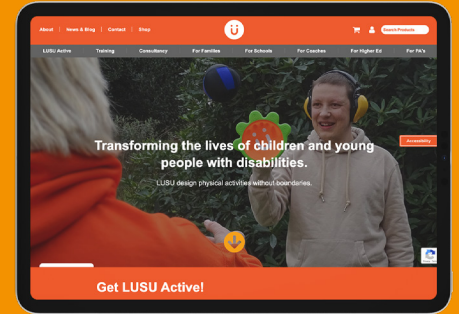


# Context and Overview

Lou Assouin and Sue Morrison are passionate about inclusivity in sports for children and young people with disabilities. Since 2006, they have been working together to deliver coaching and support to young people with disabilities in their homes, in sports venues and in schools. When we started working with them, they were working with around 20 schools between them, but they were at capacity and reaching less than 50 children with disabilities between them.



Previous Website:  
2bactive



New Website:  
LUSU

They had developed a range of educational products that – unlike so many pieces of readily-available equipment – are tactile, stimulating and safe to use for children with disabilities, impairments and learning difficulties. They had designed a complementary range of structured activity cards, to help teachers – without any specialist training – to effectively engage all young people through activity. And they were proficient in designing and writing courses for children and young people (and their coaches/ teachers) in sports inclusivity.

Yet they recognised that, to drive change, their capacity as two individuals to deliver inclusive sports coaching was limited. To make a real difference, to achieve scale and to instigate significant behavioural change, they needed to focus on training the trainers.

With the brand name '2bactive', there was a small website that had not been professionally designed, and the business was struggling to gain traction in the marketplace. They recognised they needed to find a way to raise awareness on a broader scale, but with very limited financial resources, and self-confessed "we are not business people", they were unclear on which direction to take. Their frustrations were growing in their limited ability to make a difference at scale.

A chance meeting with Sue Morrison and our Managing Director led to a conversation about her frustrations. She knew that their offer was received incredibly well by the children and the families they worked with, yet just couldn't increase market penetration. The conversation that ensued highlighted the potential benefit of design and how a well-considered brand could lead to an opportunity for

Lou and Sue to really own this space in the market and become the 'go-to' brand for disability sports coaching in the UK.

**Please note that the focus of Sue and Louise was never about driving up revenue, but on behavioural change, which can only be affected by ensuring that sports coaches, sports teachers and assistants who work with the young people are delivering truly inclusive lessons and fully engaging people with disabilities - providing them with tools and techniques that allow safe and inclusive sport.**

## Key objectives for this project:

1

### 50 SCHOOLS

To work with 50 schools in England to increase the number of sports coaches and sports teachers trained in teaching children with disabilities in a truly inclusive way.

2

### LTA

To raise awareness with the LTA (Lawn Tennis Association) of their offer, as a route to market in order to achieve scale.

3

### 500 CHILDREN

To increase their exposure to children with disabilities to more than 500 children.

## The Challenge

**They were struggling to articulate the breadth of their offer in an easy-to-understand and engaging way.** They were perceived as sports coaches with a focus on young people with disabilities, yet their offer was so much wider, given the kit they had designed and produced and the skills they had in designing and writing courses for other coaches and trainers.

It was difficult to tell their stories due to GDPR, confidentiality and constraints in the photography of the young people they were helping.

Not driven by money, but by wanting to create behavioural change in the world of disability sports, they were limited in funds and – despite active use of social media and direct marketing by post and by email – they were struggling to become known. As two individuals, their credibility was limited without a stronger brand to front their offer.

**Their frustrations were amplified when they took their equipment and ideas to a leading UK online retailer of sport equipment, who simply copied them.** With no identifiable brand or visible intellectual property on Lou and Sue's kit, they felt helpless and unable to respond.



## Project Scope

The scope of work at the outset was the development of a brand identity for the business to give Lou and Sue a vehicle with which to better articulate the breadth of their offer and also to provide the credibility they needed to achieve scale. This included naming, visual identity and messaging, along with a website and branded materials.

## Strategic Thinking

The project did expand from a strategic perspective. It became clear that the duo could add so much wider value to the sporting environment. Their concept was not just a bag of activity cards and equipment. Their proposition was about coaching, products, training and consultancy. We subsequently mapped out a complete strategic remodelling of the business, changing the direction from a tactical product offering to a highly credible solution for the market. The brief also expanded to look at how the brand should be manifested through the product design and became an opportunity for them to brand their kit and protect their intellectual property.

## Scope of Work Delivered

We named the business LUSU Sports Ltd – a seemingly striking play on the founders’ two names, yet with a more meaningful undertone: Learning United, Sports Unlimited. A vibrant, approachable and friendly identity evolved, which was rolled out across everything, including the products, activity cards, website, branded clothing and merchandise.



LUSUKit was also born, a way to position the activity bag, products and coaching cards that gave them an identity of their own, whilst tying in directly to the LUSU brand and providing a platform for a highly credible and holistic offer that would build the identity in the minds of customers. At the same time, it ensured the kit would really appeal to the children, as something they would be happy with and excited about. Branding the kit also removed the risk of others copying it in its entirety.

The resulting brand identity gave Lou and Sue the credibility they needed to gain traction in the market. Importantly, it gave them the ability to approach the market more confidently. They were immediately perceived as high quality, established, professional and experts in their field. They are now very often mistaken to be a far larger business than is actually the case.

The identity needed to be accessible, engaging and fun, in order to engage and inspire the audiences – particularly the end-users – the young people themselves who would benefit. It needed to stand out to schools and the LTA to ensure it would be recognisable, appealing, and also clear in terms of the proposition. Orange was chosen as an accessible, bright and attention-grabbing colour that would appeal to the end-users, but also be distinctive to the trainers and create a memorable identity. The ‘eyes’ over the letters ‘U’ in the word LUSU - creating a smile - were there to reflect the passion, smiles and all round exuberance of Lou and Sue, and to highlight the inclusivity and approachability of the brand. The former brand was bright, but also very busy – less accessible and more difficult to consume. Simplicity was built into the brand without losing vibrancy.

We encouraged the selection of a small number of children to become ‘hero’ customers, whose families would consent to them being photographed and used in communication, to really bring to life the experience of the end-users when working with LUSU. Lou and Sue sought permission from the children’s parents and we began to use strong imagery of them working with young people with disabilities – visualising the experience for instant resonance with the target audience.

A core proposition was crafted to ensure that organisations, such as schools and the LTA, would instantly understand the LUSU offer:

**“LUSU transform the lives of children with disabilities and their families. We do this by training people to work with them on inclusive sport and physical activity that in turn impacts mental health and wellbeing”.**

## Overview of the Market

According to Scope, the disability equality charity in England and Wales, “9% of children in the UK are disabled”. This equates to approximately 1.2million children. Many of these children are not fully included in physical education, which detrimentally effects their physical and mental wellbeing.

- Disabled children are twice as likely to be lonely compared to their non-disabled peers (72% vs 36%). They are more likely to feel they have no one to talk to, feel left out, and to feel alone.
- Disabled children are motivated to take part in sport and physical activity to feel a sense of belonging and be more independent.
- Nine in ten parents of disabled children say their child's level of physical activity is important to them. Yet, less than half of parents with disabled children feel they have enough support to help their child to be active.
- Only a quarter (25%) of disabled children say they take part in sport and activity all of the time at school.
- Worrying about getting hurt, how they look and not knowing what to do stops many disabled children being active.

(Source: "My Active Future: Including every child" (March 2020), published by Activity Alliance)

The need to make a difference to the lives of these young children was so important to Lou and Sue, yet the market landscape is vast. According to BESA, (British Educational Suppliers Association) there are currently 32,163 schools in the UK. Of these, 3,079 are nurseries or early-learning centres, 20,806 are primary schools, 23 are middle schools and 4,190 are secondary schools. Before we began working with Lou and Sue, they were engaging with just twenty schools. Their 2bactive brand had not gained traction.

Their challenge was very much about sharing their knowledge, their skills and their tools to penetrate the market further by training up existing sports teachers and disability support teachers, and thereby extending their reach. In relation to the size of the market, their targets as outlined in their relation to the capacity of two individuals, the targets were highly stretching and highly ambitious.

**9%** of children in the UK are disabled.

This equates to approximately

**1.2million**  
children

### Key Facts

The brand was launched in  
**November 2016.**

The work was provided pro-bono,  
but the studio hours not charged  
equated to £9000.00.



## Results

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The colours, coherency and consistency of the brand have created a memorable identity that has resonated with the LTA, schools and other audience groups. In Sue's words:

**“We were taken seriously immediately. Now people think we're much bigger than we are.”**

“Before the rebrand, we had connections, but we had no platform from which to be taken seriously. We were quite shy about shouting about ourselves. We had some contact names at the LTA with whom we wanted to work, but we had been unable to convince them to take us seriously. The new name and brand gave us the clarity to talk about who we are, what we stand for and what we do. We hadn't realised the power the brand could give us. Suddenly we had consistency, business cards, emails, branding at conferences, templates for our social media, a website, branded kit, etc. We were able to put together presentations to the LTA and others that were highly professional and suddenly we were able to explain the breadth of what we do with ease. I contacted the LTA again, showing the new brand, and they responded straight away, and we subsequently presented to them using the new brand and the newly articulated proposition. **We were taken seriously immediately. Now people think we're much bigger than we are.** It's still just me and Lou, so when someone phoned recently and asked 'please can you put me through to warehousing' - we again truly realised the power that the brand has and the perception we are presenting in the market!”



### Objective 1

To work with up to 50 UK schools to increase the number of sports coaches and sports teachers trained in teaching (inclusively) children with disabilities.

Exceeding  
their target of  
50 schools by  
650%

Between 2017 and 2022, LUSU have worked with **375 schools** across the UK educating teachers, coaches and teaching assistants to deliver sport inclusively. With their new brand giving them the more confidence to approach schools, they sent letters and emails to schools directing them to their website and outlining their offer. They had tried this previously, but had not gained any traction. Suddenly the response was overwhelming. They have since trained **1125 trainers** in disability sports coaching. 45 schools have hosted training events for teachers in their areas and on average, 25 people have attended each course – leading to the 1125 figure. Of those 1125 trainers, on average, there are 3 teachers from one individual school, so their actual reach has been around 375 schools – **exceeding their target of 50 schools by 650%**. These schools have included primary schools, secondary mainstream schools and some SEN schools. Initial direct marketing and some exhibition attendance led to the first sessions, and then word of mouth followed. Feedback at events has been overwhelming in terms of how the brand personifies Sue and Lou and creates an engaging platform for the training. Teachers have loved the brand and commented overwhelmingly on its fit for purpose:

“LUSU has a distinct and recognisable colour scheme. The bright orange uniform, bags and logo announces its arrival from a distance and certainly separates the organisation from others in the sector. The orange complements Lou and Sue’s bold, confident and outgoing personalities which are key features of their delivery and ability to work with members of the leisure and sports industry. Small intricacies such as the ‘eyes’ of the U portray a smiling face ... this is what we want ... children and adults enjoying being physically active.”

*Stuart Walkinshaw, Primary Sports Coaching Limited.*

“The LUSU brand is a stand-out brand. Its colour stands out and really embodies what LUSU deliver. ‘Joy, fun and expression!’ for all. The values of LUSU weave through into their brand, the wording, the ‘US’ in inclusive, it is memorable and a market leader in the sector.”

*Stephen Pearson, Community Engagement Officer/Stockport Moving Together Local Pilot SEND Officer, SEND Seashell School and College.*



## Results Against Objectives

### Objective 2

To raise awareness with the LTA (Lawn Tennis Association) of their offer, as a route to market in order to achieve scale.

LUSU have successfully built a relationship with the LTA – by targeting them initially by email and subsequently meeting them to discuss opportunities. The LTA were, in their words, “blown away” by the LUSU brand and immediately entered discussion on how the two organisations could work together. Prior to the rebrand, Sue and Lou had contacts at LTA, but had not had any success in developing the relationship despite ongoing attempts. The LUSU brand now sits on the LTA website as a partner of the organisation, alongside other known, established brands such as Sense, Dunlop and Deloitte. LUSU is officially named as the LTA’s partner in the delivery of both visually impaired tennis coaching and learning disability tennis. LUSU are also now the supplier of the visually impaired sound tennis ball which is available on the LTA website. The LTA have stated that, without the strength of the LUSU brand, they would not have been able to partner in such a way.

“The LUSU brand is one that definitely stands out from the crowd. Every time I have to explain to someone new to LUSU, that it is Lou and Sue, they immediately think it’s simple and effective ... I spoke with a venue I hadn’t been in touch with for two years the other day, and they immediately remembered the company, who they are and what they deliver. This helps us in the tennis industry when we are trying to sell inclusion. LUSU does exactly what it says on the tin!” **Matt Elkington, Disability Development Partner, LTA**

#### The LTA has also facilitated a number of additional relationships for LUSU through referrals and partnerships:



1. **The Mencap Grand Slam Tennis Challenge.** This was a month-long competition run by **Mencap, Special Olympics GB, the LTA and LUSU** in July 2022. 23 teams and 305 people took part in the Grand Slam Tennis Challenge.
2. **Sense** - the national disability charity approached LUSU to develop a Sensory Tennis programme which comprises a set of activities to make tennis accessible for people with complex disabilities. This was designed by LUSU and is LUSU branded on the Sense.org.uk website. LUSU have now trained 54 Open Court ‘Leads’ (a volunteer who coordinates the disability offer for their area in tennis) for the LTA in Sensory Tennis. They have also trained the Sense National Leads who have subsequently trained up their regional teams to deliver Sensory Tennis to hub bases. 138 people in hub bases have been trained in Sensory Tennis and Sensory Football. A further 24 carers/teachers and coaches in Wales are being trained on 3 November 2022, with a further 48 to be trained on 7 November and 14 November 2022. Due to its success, there has been interest from the International Sense Federation and the International Tennis Federation to take this worldwide. Discussions are currently in place.
3. LUSU have been sponsored by the leading sports brand **Head** – who now provide all of their clothing. This further strengthens the LUSU brand, but is also testament to its credibility, with such a high-profile brand prepared to sit alongside the LUSU identity.
4. **Dan Maskell Tennis Camps.** LUSU are now the delivery partner of the Dan Maskell Learning Disability Tennis Camps and also the Dan Maskell Visually Impaired Tennis Camps
5. **Natspec Games.** Since 2020, LUSU has delivered training across 45 colleges to 1532 pupils as partners of Natspec Games. This national sport competition provides inclusive sporting opportunities for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. They have done this in partnership with the **LTA, British Blind Sport, Sense, England Netball, Harlequins Foundation, Boccia England, Sense and England Football – supported by Sport England and AoC Sport.** There is no question in the minds of Lou and Sue that it is the strength of the LUSU name and brand that enables their logo to sit so confidently against such high-profile organisations. Without the professionalism of the brand, they simply would not have had these opportunities. Sport England have since advised LUSU that they would like to fund them to deliver across a volume of programmes and projects. Sport England are encouraging LUSU to change their company status now from a limited company to a Community Interest Company, so that they will be eligible for what could be significant funding in the years ahead. LUSU are currently exploring this change of company status.
6. LUSU have been recognised in the **LTA National Awards** twice in three years, in 2020 and in 2022, when they were awarded the LTA County, Regional and National Disability Awards.
7. Since 2017, LUSU have sold over **500 LUSUKit bags** to families, schools, councils and clubs, either bought online from their website, or directly following engagement with LUSU.

## Results Against Objectives

### Objective 3

To increase their exposure to children with disabilities to more than 500 children.

To date, it has increased the reach of LUSU to 792 children, exceeding their objective by 58%\*.

On track to reach...  
29,568 children



Through their relationship with the LTA, LUSU have also been commissioned to create a module on disability tennis for the LTA Level 2 coaching programme and this module is now delivered on day 4 of the LTA's programme. The programme was written by LUSU and all training is delivered using LUSU equipment. **To date, it has increased the reach of LUSU to 792 children, exceeding their objective by 58%\*.**

\*LUSU has already trained 168 LTA tennis tutors to deliver sports coaching inclusively. These tutors subsequently train the individual coaches working at clubs and venues across the UK. Since July 2021, 25 Level 2 coaching courses (at 16 people per cohort) have been delivered around the UK by these LTA tutors trained by LUSU, so a total of 400 coaches have been trained. With each of these 400 coaches teaching, on average, 22 children through a club programme, that equates to a reach of 8800 children (400x22), all being trained using LUSU approaches, tools and kit. On the basis that 9% of children have a disability- that equates to a reach by LUSU to 792 children.

Yet, given that only 25 of the originally trained 168 tutors have so far delivered courses, the potential for LUSU to reach a far greater number of children is clear. Through this single programme of activity, on the basis that just 50% of the 168 trained tutors go on to teach in clubs, **LUSU are on track to reach 29,568 children, of which 2661 are likely to have some form of disability.**

"Trystan, my eight-year-old son, was diagnosed with autism at the age of three and a half and was non-verbal up to the age of five. I found it very hard to find something for him to do as he was getting older. I didn't want him to be stuck at home, wanted him to have some independence away from me, in an environment that suits his needs. Trystan now enjoys his weekly session and he plays with able bodied children of his age. He does struggle with understanding basic instructions. Once grasped, he's jumping up with joy that he's hit the ball back over the net. LUSU has helped us in a great way, to see Trystan at school or at the courts from afar and seeing his face light up with enjoyment."

**Trystan's mum.**

"It is worth explaining that William, now aged 25, has learning difficulties, autism and epilepsy. William has been having tennis lessons with Sue at West Heaton Tennis Club for nearly two years now and is progressing well. He really enjoys the social aspect of these sessions, interacting not only with Sue but other tennis club members and children having their own lessons. Having access to these sessions has helped William to feel less isolated. During the first lockdown in March 2020 we tried out some of LUSUKit in the garden and had some tennis games in our local playground!"

**Elaine Jones - William's mum**

An unnamed mum of three children under six, including two with autism, has described her sessions using the LUSUKit at home as a "magical hour which has boosted their self-esteem and her own weight loss, at the same time as the children's physical health and wellbeing".

"Before the LUSUKIT was introduced to 11-year-old Patrick, who has cerebral palsy and is a wheelchair user, he would attend his PE/after-school clubs with his TA & PA but he found that the assistants would take over and do the skills for him. When his family received a LUSUKit bag, it really changed his PE/Club lessons. **LUSUKit has been so good for his independence, social skills and his mental wellbeing. The bag has been a HUGE part of his family life; they have been able to take it on their holidays where, as a family, they can now all join in with activities together...** football, rounders, tennis, dodgeball, pool games and many more. The family really believe the LUSUKIT has changed Patrick's life as now he can be part of many sporting activities.

**Sue Morrison, LUSU**

## The Effect of the Design Solution

LUSU have received consistent and repeated feedback about the strength of their brand. **Children love the name, the colours, the vibrancy and the smiley face.** Repeated feedback has been received about the accessibility of the orange and how children 'light up' when LUSUKit is brought out.



Teachers and partners find the LUSU offer clear and see the value in the combination of training, kit and lesson plans. Lou and Sue present their offer with ease, whereas before the LUSU brand, they struggled to articulate their offer and could not develop the relationships they needed to achieve scale. The names of Lou and Sue, represented in the company name, make the brand memorable, and the Learning United, Sports Unlimited resonates in a world where inclusivity is vital to improving the lives of young people with disabilities. The confidence of Lou and Sue, whilst now working with some of the country's leading brands in the space, has grown enormously. They now sell their kit online and have no concerns about their designs being copied by third party retailers. The strength of their own brand provides a level of differentiation that stands out and is complementary to a much wider, stronger and holistic offer.

## Other Influencing Factors

### Social Media coverage:

Social media has very much helped to drive awareness of the LUSU offer and supported their attempts to gain traction. That said, Sue particularly was highly active on social media before the rebrand and has since not increased her social media activity significantly. However, she has been able to change the content she publishes, communicating confidently using the language of the new brand and providing real clarity to audiences on the offer, with the LUSU identity ever-present.

### Awards:

Whilst the awards that LUSU have won since their rebrand have helped to raise awareness, particularly amongst the disability and sports markets, LUSU recognise that they would not have had the confidence or the platform to enter these awards without the brand. The awards are therefore an additional result of the brand, rather than a contributory factor to their results.

### Lou/Sue:

One could argue that the passion and determination of Lou and Sue is the reason for their success. This is true of course, but they are adamant that before the rebrand, their passion was the same, but their presence and confidence were not sufficient to develop the partnerships that they now have. They would not have convinced the LTA to work with them, refer them or endorse them.

### COVID-19:

It is true that the pandemic and resulting lockdown shone a light on those in isolation with disabilities. It encouraged sports, charity and support organisations to do more for these groups. LUSU has arguably benefited from this, but again – without the brand and the introductions it led to – they would never have been positioned to do so.

