

Three vital questions to address in a rebrand

Overlooking these questions will undermine the critical support you need to build from within



Where brands come true.

We're a national design company on a mission to help brands transform what is — to what could be.

What is the spark?

Huge infernos begin with a single flame. Major change starts that way, too. It could happen at a meeting of the board of directors. It could be at lunch shared by a cross section of leaders and managers. Or, it could happen on an elevator between floors. One day, someone goes beyond thinking about it and says,

“What about a rebrand?”

There’s your spark.

Rebrand. Seven letters. A verb with tremendous implications. Just making the suggestion takes courage. A rebrand is a complex, comprehensive project that will take weeks, months or longer. It’s risky. It is an investment. It signals progress. It forces change. It could be loved. It could be hated. It will be hard work.

A rebrand will impact an organization in dozens of ways internally and externally. If executed properly, a rebrand will unite your organization in direction and vision. It is one of the greatest strategic tools for a leader who needs to renew confidence and strengthen an organization’s spirit. But in order to succeed, you must anticipate three vital questions and address them for every person, ideally as part of the rebranding process.


1 What does this mean to me?

A rebrand affects everyone from the board room to the mail room. It is designed as a solution for the entire organization. Its purpose can be explained in charts, PowerPoint presentations, market studies and projections. Clearly, it is for the good of the organization.

But the individuals who compose that organization need to see what it means to them.

Directly. Personally.

Every person in your organization has an impact on your success. What they think and how they feel makes a difference in their job performance. How they perform individually affects the people around them. Their coworkers can perceive attitude. And if one person chooses to vocalize their internal displeasure or skepticism, others will listen. Very quickly, they begin to agree. Opinions become masked as facts — and suddenly the whole project — is threatened. The less information shared, the greater the opportunity for fabrications and rumors.



Even a coal miner can't work in complete darkness. During a rebrand, it is up to management and those directly involved in the project to shed light on what is happening. Not every single detail. Most certainly, the positive changes taking place. Tell not only what but why. Start with the what. "Department A and Division B are being merged." Then immediately reveal the why. "Some jobs will change but none will be eliminated. We are combining redundant operations to improve efficiency. This change will be good for everyone. Each person will have more time to concentrate on what they do best."

Individuals will also want to know what they will have to do differently. They will want to know if there will be increased expectations. If I perform to these expectations, how will I be rewarded? How will I be supported along the way? The personal questions that are going through people's minds are far more important to them than the color scheme of a new logo. Answers need to be specific and honest. Eliminating fear reduces doubt.

Telling people what this change means to each of them is the difference between creating an army of advocates or a pack of adversaries.

2 Why are you doing this?

Organization A is losing money. Difficult decisions are made. Jobs are lost. The situation eventually stabilizes, but action must be taken to ensure this does not happen again. Action that will expand the market share. A rebrand is the solution. But a rebrand can be a lengthy and costly process. How does this decision seem to your employees? Are they confused? “You laid off three of my best friends, and now you’re spending money on a new slogan?”

“Why?”

Organization B is making money. Profits are rising and market share is growing. Still, there is a perception that needs to be addressed. Profits ensure stability, but the organization’s leadership also wants to show a social conscience. Its moral compass. The public needs to see it is about more than making money. “We have a heart and a soul. We can’t truly move forward without giving back.” A rebrand can personalize an organization’s collective character by highlighting its core mission and vision. Its true archetype. But will your employees understand? There will be skeptics. “This is risky. Everything seems to be going so well.

“Why?”

Whether your organization is surfing tall waves or barely treading water, your people will wonder why. **Why now?**

You have your reasons. Share them. Don't exclude, include. Because so much of your brand flows from within, that's also your greatest source of strength in a rebrand. To succeed a rebrand must involve a broad cross section of the entire organization that slices through every layer, from the longest-serving to the newest hires.

A rebrand needs to create buy-in for optimum effectiveness. Hosting a series of co-creation workshops can be a productive tool. Get the people who represent the various groups and areas of your organization together talking alongside the internal and external marketing teams that execute the brand day to day. Create a dialogue and collaboration. Talk and listen. Then talk and listen some more.

Involve people in the rebranding process and you won't have to tell them why you are doing it. They'll know.

3 What's in it for me?

This is the most important question of all. It is the proverbial elephant in the room. No one wants to say it, but every person is thinking it. And your answer needs to be more than a new fleece hoodie.

Don't assume this question is about greed. Not everyone wants the answer to be money. Some want to be assured of job security and stability. Others want opportunity and upward mobility. Collaboration. Consideration. Recognition. Each one of these concerns bears a name and a face. Each is a thoughtful human being who deserves an answer.

It helps if you imagine a collection of circles. At the center of each circle is one individual in your organization. Each individual has their needs at the very heart of the circle. We call these **Circles of Consideration™**. Sometimes they overlap. Other times they stand alone or in small groupings. These circles not only define the direction of a rebrand, because they overlap they influence other secondary, underlying aspects of a brand such as company culture, corporate values and collective aspirations.

The person at the center of each circle asserts his or her own opinions and desires. Depending on their power and influence, they can limit or greatly widen their Circle of Consideration, thus limiting or widening the impact their decisions have upon a brand.

Answering the “what’s in it for me?” question must speak directly to each of these circles and the individual’s needs. Decision makers will lead, but it is up to each of these circles to put in an eight-, 10- or 12-hour day and bring the leaders’ vision to fruition.

From new opportunities to additional responsibilities, communicate what’s in it for each individual. Make it personal because they will take it personally.

There are a hundred or more reasons to rebrand, and there are just as many potential consequences. One of the most satisfying results of a successful rebrand is the unity and camaraderie it creates.

Bringing people together to buy something is doable. Create interest and make it useful. Bringing people together to support something, to take pride in creation and ownership and performance, and to enthusiastically promote it to their friends and strangers is phenomenal.

It requires knowing the individual questions – and being prepared to answer them, one at a time.

Considering a rebrand?

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