

Seeing your brand's forest for the trees

How to funnel interviews and data into one clear,
insightful vision



Where brands come true.

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

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Too much data, too little time

There's an old saying about a person who can't see the forest for the trees. It means people often place too much emphasis on the thousands of little details, the trees, and fail to see the larger issue, the forest.

They become so overwhelmed they can't discern the big picture.

It's what keeps many people from reaching goals. Sure, we need to pay attention to the little details. But if all we see is the multitude of obstacles that lie in our path, we'll never get beyond the challenges and reach our destination.

The same thing can happen in the research phase of a rebrand. Focus groups, surveys and interviews are great ways to gather information and opinions, but how much is too much? How do you pluck patterns from all the details? How do you give the proper weight to the key elements in order to unlock a vision?

Be the scales

The American court system is symbolized by a blindfolded woman, with a sword in one hand and a set of scales in the other. Ultimately she represents what is intended to be a fair and balanced system.

In formulating the vision for a rebrand, being fair and balanced is crucial. Decision makers have to listen to the information that was gathered without prejudice.

The research phase of a rebrand is intended to report without bias what was heard and find patterns. Words that repeat. A dominant opinion. Common suggestions.

Then it is up to those involved in the process to weigh in, provide expertise on what was heard the most AND what is the most effective information that will enable you to address the problem and come to a solution.

Getting the insight in sight

OK, so you've assembled a wealth of information. You've sorted through some, perhaps separating criticism from recommendation. The good from the bad. But there's still way more information in front of you than answers. The challenge today, in any kind of BIG data pool, is to discover the insight buried there.

To find answers you need questions. Take that information haystack and start picking it apart.

Ask questions like:

- **Here's what we heard, but what does this mean?**
- **How can this align with our leadership's intentions?**
- **How can we use this information to aim ourselves toward success given the current competitive landscape, government regulations, public opinion and other qualifiers?**

What you're looking for here is insight. It's that combination of experience, perception and gut feelings that have helped you get where you are today. This is the insight that will get you where you want to be tomorrow.

Try taking your answers and make a "word cloud." Keep going. Get as many thoughts on paper or a screen or a whiteboard as you can.

Then take a step back.
You'll be amazed what comes into focus.

Every trip a new trail

You've seen the trees. You've cut a few down and you're well on your way to formulating your vision. Pretty soon, you'll see the forest, too.

Remember, it's a process of give and take.

There isn't a mathematic formula. It's more like clay and a potter's wheel. It changes as it progresses and is transformed by each touch.

Every rebrand is unique.

There are always going to be muddy areas that are shaped and adapted to fit the leadership's vision. And throughout the process, the little details have to be absorbed into the much larger vision in order to move ahead.

■ **Otherwise, you're just going to stay lost in the woods.**

Considering a rebrand?

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