

# What are rebranding strategies?



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# What are rebranding strategies?

Of the many factors that compel a company or organization to rebrand, mergers and acquisitions are perhaps the most obvious. Two entities coming together to form a new entity begs for a new identity to match.

## **Beyond the obvious lie many more reasons to rebrand.**

These are the branding strategies that dig beneath the surface to find the root problem and utilize the various elements of rebranding to create a solution. Intelligent and thorough in their examination of the existing problem, one or more of the following five strategies may be incorporated into the rebranding process.

# 01

## Change direction

No matter the service or the industry, maintaining the status quo is not a viable solution. It is indeed a problem of its own in a world that increasingly demands leading-edge products, technologies and care.

Changing direction may be prompted by the passage of time. If you need to blow the dust off your brand every time you pick it up, it is time for a reinvention. If yours is a longtime organization that is still enjoying success, but not as big a slice of the marketplace as you feel is attainable, it is time to find out why your loyal customers stay loyal and why your new customers chose you. From that information, discover how the industry has changed and the role you play in it. Determine what core competence keeps you a player and how it can be expressed in today's language. Those building blocks are a marvelous foundation for a rebrand.

Perhaps you are doing the same things as others in your industry. Then, it may be time to redefine that industry in order to emerge from the pack and set a new pace. If you have evolved over time and your core competency has changed, it is time to let the public know. Companies have become more environmentally conscious. Hospitals and medical centers have become more specialized. Higher education has created new degrees and tweaked familiar standards to adjust to a changing workplace. Tell the world.

Change for the better need not be feared; it should be welcomed as an opportunity – your unique opportunity to communicate what you do best today, and how you plan to continue to be the best 10 or 20 years from now.

# 02

## Broaden scope, scale and/or visibility

A child who begins to learn the piano starts with one song. Perhaps your company or organization started the same way. But the marketplace has changed and you have changed with it. You're no longer a one-trick pony. It isn't the company that you need to change. It's the public's perception of it.

Take the classic boat shoe, the Sperry Top-Sider. But that isn't all Sperry sells. The company also sells coats, jackets, shirts, socks and accessories – a boatload of stuff. So when Sperry changed its identity, the company dropped the term “Top-Sider,” played around a bit with the familiar sailing logo, and added the line, “Since 1935.” Sperry's message: we are still the company you've known and trusted for decades, but our scope is much broader than deck shoes.

**This is also a time to broaden your brand's scale by removing the self-imposed limitations of categorization or geography.**

Telephone companies are great examples. Today's telephone company is likely to be national, not limited to a city or region, and also likely offers a roster of communications and data services. Gone are the days of the Oak Ridge Telephone Company. Welcome to CenturyLink.

**Size perception is another focal point for a rebrand.**

Just as being placed in one category or one geographic location can be limiting, so can the perception that your company or organization is too small to get the job done. Here is where elements such as experience, expansions or accolades can be utilized in a rebrand to enhance size perception. You do not have offices in London and Paris. But you have done work there. And with today's technology, global services are achievable no matter where your home office is situated.

**Enhancing visibility is another strategic driver for a rebrand.**

What sets you apart from your competitors? You had better know the answer to that question. And if you know the answer, shouldn't your customers know it, too? If you have become just another face in the crowd, a rebrand can provide separation and distinction. The Pizza Hut rebrand of 2014 is a good example. Designers did away with the red roof, yellow slash and green dot (which seemed to say “catsup, mustard and pickle” more than “pizza”) in favor of a single color, modern logo. It looks good on the boxes and makes a longtime player stand out among the six other pizza places down the block.

# 03

## Narrow the scope

Narrowing the scope of your brand is not a negative if it plays upon your strengths and firmly establishes you as the source of a specific product or service. It can actually be hugely positive, as though you have taken your target audience and aimed for the bull's eye.

For example, Hawaiian Airlines flies well beyond the pineapple fields of the 50th state. It operates flights to Japan, China, Australia and JFK in New York City. But it also wants to be known as the inter-island carrier of choice. Enter "Ohana by Hawaiian," a regional subsidiary carrier fully integrated into the Hawaiian Airlines network. The company explains the change this way: "Ohana, the Hawaiian word for family, conveys the mission of our new operation: bringing people together."

**A broad company, now with an element that has a very specific focus.**

# 04

## Change internal culture

Changing the internal culture of an organization has an impact upon every stakeholder, from employees to consumers.

It can rejuvenate an internal morale that has gone stale by enlivening pride and restoring confidence. It can renew a competitive spirit and create an army of advocates. And, a new internal culture can create an excitement that spreads externally to consumers who become eager to share in the enthusiasm.

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When three prominent Omaha-area healthcare entities – The Nebraska Medical Center, Bellevue Medical Center and UNMC Physicians – formally joined forces as Nebraska Medicine, the rebrand and a dramatic, unifying emblem to be used by both Nebraska Medicine and its longstanding partner, the University of Nebraska Medical Center signified a new internal culture that brought nearly 10,000 people together. Several elements of the new identity successfully built upon Nebraska Medicine’s legacy, while at the same time illustrating a Nebraska heritage and global mission shared by Nebraska Medicine and UNMC. It has been well received internally and externally.

A rebrand can also illustrate the change in internal culture when the affiliation of a subsidy or branch is transferred to a parent organization. The new identity helps to indicate the strong future of the new organization rather than dwell on the elimination of the subsidy and loss of its independence.

# 05

## Change expressed personality

Personality puts the “person” in your brand and gives it life. Rebranding can refresh your public image by enhancing your brand’s personality.

You may use a laundry detergent because your mother did, but is that enough reason today for your kids to use it? Sure, it has been around forever. But does that make it the best? Longevity is **staying in business**. Garnering new customers thanks to an updated brand personality is **building your business**.


One of our favorite examples is Old Spice. Not sure if it ever was the choice of fishing boat captains everywhere, but the tongue-in-cheek marketing of the “Smell like a man” campaign, coupled with the introduction of the bold, daring “spokesman,” and that old image of your great-grandfather’s cologne went out with the tide. Today, even teenagers use it.

**That is about as significant a change for the better that a public image can take.**



# These are five of the key branding strategies and reasons behind rebranding.

**As every corporation, organization, healthcare system and university is unique, so would be the strategy behind a complex rebrand designed specifically for them.**



You know where  
you want to go.  
Identifying the  
correct branding  
strategy will help  
take you there.

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