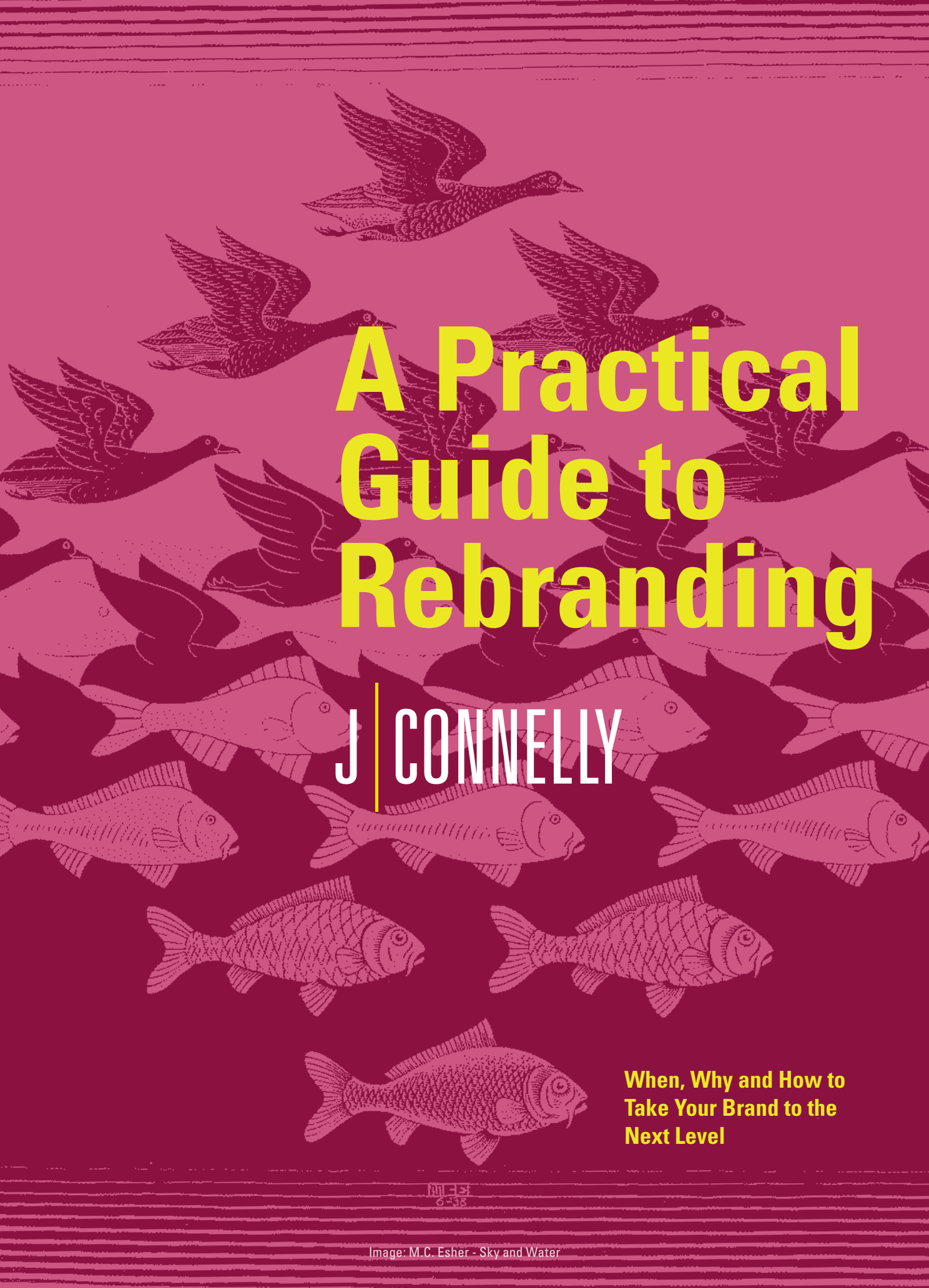




A Practical Guide to Rebranding

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**When, Why and How to
Take Your Brand to the
Next Level**

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I. Introduction

What's Rebranding All About?

Shift happens. Whether your business has evolved and outgrown your original brand—or the market has changed enough that your differentiators are no longer all that different—rebranding can help put perception of your company back in line with reality.

Constant tweaks and updates to your brand keep you relevant. Occasional refreshes—like the one undertaken by eBay in 2012—help minimize the stale parts of your business and refocus on growth areas. For eBay, that meant a move away from its genesis as an online auction of secondhand goods and collectibles in favor of a new identity as a marketplace for full-priced, never-before-owned products (with the option to “Buy It Now”).

“Seventeen years ago, eBay created a new way for people to buy and sell. Since that time, we’ve enabled millions of people to launch their own businesses, and helped change the way the world shops for things they need and love,” the company said at the time of the announcement. “We’re pleased to introduce our refreshed logo. It reflects who we are today — a global online marketplace that offers a cleaner, more contemporary and consistent experience.”

But a rebrand takes things one step further: it signals the end of one chapter in your business and the start of something new. Maybe risking the brand loyalty of a previous generation to appeal to a younger one (like Old Spice did with its “The Man Your Man Could Smell Like” viral ad campaign) or dropping a moniker that limits your appeal (the YMCA is now just “The Y”).

There are many reasons to consider a rebrand—and one big reason against it: Established brands—even imperfect ones—are valuable assets. They communicate something about what you do and for whom you do it. But if that message is no longer relevant to your business, it's time to consider starting anew.



eBay refreshed its brand, including its logo, in 2012 to showcase the brand's evolution.

II. Know When It's Time to Rebrand

The rebranding equation is pretty straightforward:



Will your new brand open up enough revenue-generating opportunities to justify the expense, time, additional resources and disruption that will happen before the rebrand is done and successfully implemented?

The more difficult task is determining when you're missing opportunities (*see Page 3 for some of the most common symptoms*).

If the major goals of marketing are to:

- I Entice new clients
- I Deepen relationships with existing clients
- I Command a higher value for your products and services
- I Attract and retain top talent

... then a rebrand should be a shot of adrenaline to all of these endeavors.

Sometimes, a company has gotten itself into enough trouble—lawsuits, investigations, negative press—that a rebrand is necessary in order for the business to continue. Or a major business event, such as a change in leadership or a merger, makes the old brand obsolete.

But more often, a rebrand addresses subtle but persistent problems in market positioning or the early warning signs that a brand is about to lose its relevance.

In 1991, world-famous Kentucky Fried Chicken (then, as now, among the most well-known brands in the world), changed its name to KFC. The move was solid business practice, as the cash-strapped Commonwealth of Kentucky had trademarked its name and was pressuring the company to pay significant licensing fees to continue using its original moniker.

But KFC had another reason for the switch: to disassociate its brand with the unhealthy connotations “fried” had for consumers.



As consumer tastes evolve, so too must a brand's visual identity (along with its product offering).

TOP 10 SIGNS YOUR BRAND NEEDS AN UPDATE

1. Your company has stopped growing or has lost market share.
2. Inquiries about your service or product have slowed. Those who do contact you aren't a great fit for what you offer.
3. Your existing clients aren't aware of everything you do or are only taking advantage of one or two services.
4. You're facing increased competition across the board.
5. More and more specialists are competing for your would-be clients' business.
6. You've changed what you do and who you do it for but the market hasn't noticed.
7. Your clients have changed dramatically since you first started working together.
8. Your pitches and presentations are built around addressing misperceptions rather than highlighting your great work.
9. Your logo, website and materials feel stale and don't garner a positive reaction.
10. Your job candidates aren't top notch—or you don't get enough applicants to meet your open positions.

While KFC had built its reputation on quality fried chicken, it was losing sales as the low-fat, low-cholesterol diet craze took hold. Even with grilled and lighter fare menu options, the public associated the restaurant only with its greasier eats.

The rebrand—which included new packaging and service training for the restaurant's workers—helped the company grow sales and maintain a 40 percent market share through the end of the 20th century. But as times and tastes have changed, the brand is again considering rebranding to combat the rise of competitors like Chick-fil-A.

Knowing when it's time to rebrand requires you to identify what's holding you back and being prepared to part with it—even (and especially) if that's the thing that made you successful in the first place.

By 2011, Starbucks was so ubiquitous that many companies had co-opted its



“big green ring” branding. The company dropped it—and its name on product packaging—to simplify its overall look.

The rebrand wasn't met with consumer fanfare, but it has helped position the company for future success (including offering more non-coffee beverages and products) and separate it from “copycat” competition.

It takes confidence to lose what's been working but if your brand works without it, it might be time to say goodbye. Being a leader brand means constant forward motion to maintain a progressive image.



Starbucks separated its brand from copycats by evolving its look

III. Understanding the Big Picture

If you don't have a bevy of branding and marketing professionals at your disposal, how do you ensure you're evolving your brand in the right direction? Even if you do have any army of marketers, you need to know how to direct them.

The first step is to get clear on what you want your rebrand to accomplish.

Do you want to:

- Change how your brand is viewed and clear up misperceptions?
- Educate more people on who you are and what you do?
- Draw a clear distinction between your approach and that of your competitors?
- Benefit from a deeper resonance of your marketing messages?

Even if you are attempting to solve a specific challenge with a rebrand, thorough research can help uncover defects that could impact your company for years to come.

A **BRAND AUDIT** provides a level check to see how well you are communicating your value to clients, prospects and internal audiences. It involves taking a deep dive and interviewing key stakeholders, customers and third parties, as well as analyzing the marketplace and reviewing competitors' branding and marketing.



At the end of this intensive process, you'll have not only the underlying

research to set the brand strategy, but a range of suggested actions that will help drive your brand's success—from streamlining the look and feel to better connecting sales and marketing.

Of course, the brand audit is often easier to complete and results in better outcomes if you **FIND THE RIGHT PARTNER.**

The novelty of talking about your brand with someone new usually results in wildly different (and more honest) responses than you'd get on your own.

Your partner will also provide some much-needed perspective on what sets you apart. And you'll benefit from their experience while tackling the many facets of the rebrand process.

Then, it's time to detail your approach. In addition to a tactical plan (more on that in a minute), you need to articulate four key areas to ensure your team stays the course and that all of your efforts are integrated:

1. ARTICULATE YOUR STRATEGY.

When you're in the midst of a complicated project, it can be hard to remember why you started in the first place. Clearly lay out why you're undertaking this rebrand, what business goals it will achieve and how the finished product will serve you well into the future.

2. CRAFT YOUR STORY.

Researchers at Emory University found that a compelling narrative actually rewires a person's brain and creates a kind of muscle memory that keeps that story top of mind—long after they're done reading. For your brand, that means instant recall when it's time for prospects to make purchasing decisions. Write your story in language and tone that will resonate with your prospective clients and that aligns with your overall rebrand strategy.

3. LOOKS MATTER.

You can't pull colors from a hat or haphazardly place your logo wherever feels right if you want total alignment.

EXTERNAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you familiar with the company product suite?
2. What comes to mind when you think of the company?
3. If the company were a person, how would you describe them?
4. Who do you consider to be the company competition?
5. What do you feel the company is currently doing well and what do you think they can improve on?

INTERNAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How would you briefly describe your company?
2. What 3-5 words best embody your company's personality?
3. Do you think the current messaging and visual identity system successfully capture the brand personality?
4. Walk us through your offerings. What is the relationship between them?
5. How do you currently market your products and services?

Just as we size up people based on their appearance, dress and stature, we assess brands based on their logo, colors and collateral assets. Before you start redesigning your logo, think about all the places it will appear and what emotions you want your clients to connect with it.

4. KEEP IT PERSONAL.

Even the most high-tech companies are made up of people. And your products or services are bought by individuals. Articulate your brand principles well enough that your employees will know how to prioritize their work and make decisions, and so that your customers will connect with the “softer” side of your brand.

Finally, it's time to create the tactical plan—and identify the people who will carry it out.

Examining questions for both internal and external audiences can help uncover unknown brand strengths or misperceptions.

REBRAND HIERARCHY

Tackling a rebrand through a step-by-step process will ensure that the big decisions will trickle down to every customer touchpoint.

STRATEGY

1. Articulate your mission, vision and values
2. Research audience needs, market size and competitive advantages
3. Detail brand position
4. Create messaging
5. Identify visual standards

WEB DEVELOPMENT

1. Keyword research to drive traffic
2. Sitemap
3. Wireframes
4. Mood boards: colors, typography, imagery
5. Design
6. Develop
7. Test and review

MARKETING COLLATERAL

1. Presentations and sales decks
2. Marketing and press materials
3. Office supplies
4. Building signage

Email

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Clients | 1. Release | 1. General posts |
| 2. Prospects | 2. Interview opportunities | 2. Influencer outreach |
| 3. Vendors and partners | | 3. Direct message/engagement |

REBRAND AWARENESS

With the rebrand done and announced, it's time to start ongoing marketing and public relations campaigns. These efforts will generate more awareness, drive traffic to your site and continue to build on the positioning that underpins the new brand.

IV. Organizing the Process

A tactical plan will help you identify all of the concrete steps that will make up the rebrand—and assign a responsible party and timeline to each one.

While many of the activities of rebranding—choosing a name, writing a tagline, selecting a color palette, designing a logo—aren't in and of themselves terribly complicated, it can take considerable time to create variations, secure approvals and roll out to your internal and external stakeholders. Piling all of these activities into the same time frame makes the process more cumbersome to manage—but it doesn't have to be a struggle to get it done.

The hierarchy of a rebrand will mimic your overall lead generation cycle. If you're not sure where to focus, refer back to your strategy and existing sales channels.

TAKE STOCK

Use this checklist of common properties that will need to be updated with new brand assets:

OFFICE SUPPLIES

- ☐ Business cards
- ☐ Letterhead and mailing supplies
- ☐ Folders
- ☐ Name plates
- ☐ Security badges

INTERNAL

- ☐ Job descriptions
- ☐ Employee handbook
- ☐ PowerPoint templates
- ☐ Word templates
- ☐ Excel templates
- ☐ Contracts
- ☐ Invoices
- ☐ Annual reports
- ☐ NDAs
- ☐ Internal memos

Once you've decided a rebrand is in order (and you have the research to prove it), outline major work categories, responsibilities and timing.

1. TAKE STOCK.

Identify all the ways people experience and identify with your existing brand—both properties you “own” and ones you use to promote your company. See the sidebar for common properties that will need to be updated.

2. SET YOUR BUDGET.

By identifying what exactly needs to change, you'll have a better idea of how far your dollars will go. Some things—like ordering new business cards—may get absorbed into existing budgets. Others—such as working with an outside vendor on a website overhaul—likely aren't factored in year to year.

How much you have to spend may be beyond your control but allocating it is important work. Think about the resources at your disposal—both people whose talents you can call on, and the systems, tools and materials you use day to day. What are the strengths and weaknesses of what you have? What projects have you excelled at in the past? Use your history to your advantage. Areas where you don't have expertise, like setting up an SEO strategy, are best left to outside firms.

Don't underestimate (or ignore) the cost to your team's productivity and morale if they're expected to carry on with their regular work during the rebrand. Working with an outside firm may seem expensive—until you realize that the launch of the rebrand is going to coincide with your busy season.

You'll also want to consider costs associated with getting the rebrand out to the public. Whether it's putting out a press release, embarking on a year-long thought leadership campaign or hitting the conference circuit, you'll want to ensure you get a long shelf life out of the “newness” of your brand.

SIGNAGE

(FOR EVERY LOCATION)

- ☐ Building
- ☐ Lobby
- ☐ Door
- ☐ Interior
- ☐ Building directory
- ☐ Parking lot

WEBSITE

- ☐ Domain name and variations
 - ☐ SEO strategy
 - ☐ Website copy
 - ☐ Analytics and Google tools
 - ☐ Page titles
 - ☐ Meta descriptions
 - ☐ Redirects and backlinks
 - ☐ Web directories
-
- ☐ LinkedIn
 - ☐ Facebook
 - ☐ Twitter
 - ☐ Google+
 - ☐ YouTube
 - ☐ Pinterest
 - ☐ Instagram

3. DETERMINE YOUR TEAM ...

Vet and select your external partners and determine clear roles for everyone who will participate in the process. Identifying one person as a single point of contact for all things rebrand will save your team lots of time (and frustration) as the project gets rolling.

If you're not sure who to invite to the rebrand party, try to imagine the roles you need individuals to fill:

- THE CHAMPION** – Typically the CEO or some other C-level executive, this person has the authority to make things happen and is totally bought in on the rebrand initiative.
- THE ARCHITECT** – A senior-level marketing person who understands the rebrand process (and maybe has been through it a time or two). This person keeps things moving forward and keeps the project from becoming a never-ending focus group that can't come to a decision.
- THE CREATIVES** – Designers, writers, digital strategists, social gurus—this is the group that will give you big ideas that are also practical. Some understanding of cross-channel communications is critical, and having people fill multiple roles can help avoid missteps once the rollout is underway.

4. ... AND INITIAL STAKEHOLDERS.

A rebrand doesn't happen in a vacuum. You need not only approvals but buy-in along the way. Assemble the following teams:

- THE COMMITTEE** – Gather folks from across departments to weigh in on early decisions and “gut check” the rebrand's momentum. If there are issues along the

way—legal can't get the trademark the creative team wants—this group is responsible for coming up with alternative solutions.

EMPLOYEE ADVOCATES –

Waiting until the day before the rebrand launches to get employee buy-in is a bad idea. But nor can you go out to every single person and get their input on every decision. Employee advocates help communicate what's happening at the ground level and can also bring recurrent concerns to the creative team's attention.

TRUSTED OUTSIDERS –

Maybe it's a long-term client, a vendor, an industry peer you respect. Getting an outsider's perspective (or a few outsiders' perspectives) can offset groupthink and halt an embarrassing mistake. Just choose carefully. If the goal of a rebrand is to move away from where you've been, not everyone will be on board with the change.

5. SET THE TIMELINE.

How long does it take to complete a rebrand project? The answer depends—on the complexity of your existing brand, the size of your rebrand team, your budget and willingness to prioritize rebrand work.

Like most things in life, you only get two out of three—good, fast or cheap.

The entire process will likely take a year to complete—especially if it's research intensive. And despite setting a “launch date,” implementing the brand never really stops.

SOFTWARE

- ☐ Time tracking
- ☐ Payroll/Benefits provider
- ☐ Inbound marketing
- ☐ CRM
- ☐ Accounting/Accounts payable
- ☐ Intranet
- ☐ File sharing
- ☐ Project management

MARKETING MATERIALS

- ☐ Ads: digital, print, etc.
- ☐ AdWords
- ☐ Paid social
- ☐ Directories and professional organizations
- ☐ Sponsorships
- ☐ Sales presentations and brochures
- ☐ Proposals
- ☐ Trade show displays
- ☐ Promotional items (mugs, pens, etc.)
- ☐ Case studies and testimonials
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Videos
- ☐ Boilerplate/About Us copy

V. Measuring Success

The final touches are on your new website. Your clients have been informed of the pending change. You've gotten good initial feedback from vendors and partners. The press release crosses the wires.

Now what?

First, take a breath and maybe even a bow. Completing a rebrand is no small feat.

Then, it's time for the post-mortem.

Yes, there are quantifiable success measures for a rebrand, like a boost in sales or more web traffic. But the months-long process of examining your company's operations, goals and strategies deserves some introspection.

Gather your creative team and your stakeholders and get their input:

- Did we achieve our goals for this project?
- Did we communicate effectively with our key audiences?
- What worked as planned?
- What could have gone better? What can we do in the future to ensure we don't make the same mistakes?

The answers to these questions will likely give you a roadmap for "Phase II" of the program—or the next batch of tweaks that will need to be made to keep your brand on the cutting edge. And it will help various departments operate better as a team on any number of projects going forward.

You can formalize this process even further by sending surveys to your clients, prospects and employees. You'll be able to break down:

- Attitudes and emotions related to your new brand
- How well various constituents feel you're representing different areas of your business
- Alignment of perceived messages with your initial objectives

Such a survey can be done annually to keep tabs on client sentiment (and help you keep your new brand relevant over the long term).

LONG-TERM SIGNS OF A SUCCESSFUL REBRAND

1. People know how to talk about what you do and why you're different, which translates to more referrals.
2. Your website actually engages prospects and generates leads, shortening your sales cycle.
3. Your clients get a deeper understanding of everything you do and how it all adds up to support their success.
4. Your brand looks bigger, better and more progressive than your competition.
5. You can target your services and expertise to defined consumer groups, while still promoting all the various things you do.
6. You are seen as an authoritative leader in your field, not just keeping up with changes, but actively engaging in the evolution of your industry.
7. Greater online visibility means more of the right kinds of clients will find you and seek out your expertise (often at a higher price point).
8. The C-suite and beyond will have more invitations to share their viewpoints—in person, online and in published pieces.
9. You'll be proud to share your latest presentation—not embarrassed by its overall look.
10. Great job candidates will seek you out (and be bought in to your larger mission).

Beyond Accolades

After the initial fanfare and feedback, how do you know if your rebrand is working?

Here are three critical elements to watch for in the weeks after a rebrand:

1. ALIGNMENT.

Your company's strengths, weaknesses and desired outcomes are clear—to everyone from senior management to the most-junior employee. Juggling priorities, choosing assignments and selecting business to go after all become more streamlined.

2. SELF-SELECTING CLIENTS.

The people and companies you want to work with now want to work with you. Your inbound leads are better qualified, educated and ready to buy than they were before the rebrand.

3. FUTURE FOCUS.

There are always going to be bad days and disappointing moments at the office. But a rebrand can help align everyone toward the future of your business. You'll stop hearing about "how we used to do things" and start hearing more ideas about how to improve.

VI. Conclusion

Rebranding is a process, not a set-it-and-forget-it project. But, it's worth the trouble to ensure your company is on the right path to future growth.

The success of your rebrand depends on following the right steps, in the right order: Assemble your team, perform a brand audit, define your strategy and make a tactical plan. Don't be discouraged when you experience changing timelines and unanticipated costs—it is, after all, a big undertaking.

The positive response from the rebrand in all facets of the business should more than compensate for the bumps in the road.

**Still not sure
if a rebrand is
right for you or
where to start?**

JConnelly is here to help.
Contact **Chris Cherry, Chief
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