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# REBRAND YOUR BUSINESS IN 10 STEPS

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A rebrand isn't about changing your logo, it's about changing perceptions. It's your opportunity to change the way people see your business. Generally, there are only two situations when you need to consider a rebrand: When your business is changing; or when the sector you operate in is changing. To ensure you remain relevant to your customers in these circumstances, you might want to adapt the way you present your business.

## WHEN DO YOU NEED TO REBRAND?

If there are changes to your business, they are usually something you have planned; the launch of a new range of products, a move into a new sector or perhaps a merger with another company. In these situations a rebranding exercise is a proactive step, to support the broader business strategy.

But changes to your sector are often unanticipated, and always the result of decisions and actions outside your business. This could be the arrival of a new competitor, changes to legislation or simply a change in customer behaviour. The impact of these changes is often (but not always) negative, and a rebranding exercise is part of the business strategy to solve the problem this unanticipated change has created.

# HOW DO YOU REBRAND?

Rebranding your business can seem a daunting prospect. It's a big task. But the reality is that a rebranding project is just a number of smaller tasks which, when combined, can bring about massive change – and massive benefit – to your business.

The aim of this guide is to give you some practical advice and break the project down into ten steps. At each step we ask the question you need to answer. We can't give you the answer – the answer is different for every business – but we explain what information you need to consider to find your answer.

We hope you find the guide useful.

## STEP ONE: WHAT'S YOUR GOAL?

Before you begin to rebrand, you need to consider what your goal is. What's the journey you want to take your company on? Where would you like your business to be in 12 months time? If you have a clear understanding of what you want to achieve, you will be able to make much better use of your resources, and achieve your objective in the most efficient way.

Your goal may be a financial one; increase turnover by 25% or improve your profit margin by 5%, for example. Or you could choose something that's not financial, but equally valuable; a specific number of customers each month or the number of sales you want to reach each week.

Being able to measure your progress is vital to gauging the success of any rebranding project. Although you can't measure the outcome until later (see Step 10), you need to establish your criteria for success at the outset.

## STEP TWO: WHAT'S YOUR PURPOSE?

Your purpose is what drives your business. It's the belief or vision that lies at the heart of your business and motivates you. A clear purpose helps to give your business direction, and acts as a reference point for decision making. This clarity will bring many benefits to your business, but it is particularly valuable in the rebranding process.

There are two things to consider when writing your purpose. Firstly, it should be short. You need to capture it in a single sentence. Secondly, it should focus on your customers. Try and describe the benefit you want to bring to them.

A clearly defined purpose will provide a solid foundation for all of your communication, helping you to develop a message that is consistent, in print, in person and online.

## STEP THREE: WHAT ARE YOUR VALUES?

Your values help you to identify the behaviour that is required to fulfil your purpose (and achieve your goal). They are usually a list of adjectives that provide a reference point for everyone within your business. If an action doesn't reflect at least one of your values, you probably shouldn't be doing it.

Although many companies use their values as a marketing tool, they are really an internal asset, used to guide the behaviour of your team, rather than influence the behaviour of your audience. Your aim should be for your values to become something that your audience experiences – through their interaction with your business – rather than something they read.

In this way your values become a tool to help you create an experience (and brand) that is distinctive and memorable for your audience, and differentiates your business from your competitors.

## STEP FOUR: WHO IS YOUR TARGET MARKET?

Your target market is the group of customers you want to buy your products or services; your 'ideal' customer. Identifying your target market allows you to be more focused, and make the best use of your resources.

The 'ideal' customer that forms your target market is the customer that will be most influential in helping you to achieve your goal. They may be the group that spends the most, or perhaps spends most frequently. They could be the group of customers that are the easiest to sell to, or they may just be geographically closest. The criteria for an 'ideal' customer will be different for every business. What's important is that you know which criteria are most important to you.

When you have established your target market you need to create a profile for your 'ideal' customer – a list of similarities between each member. This will have two advantages for you; it will help you to find more customers like them, and it will help you to communicate with them more effectively.



## STEP FIVE: WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT?

The role of your brand is to help you stand out from your competitors. It's a tool to help you capture and communicate the personality of your business – all the things that make you different.

It might be the heritage of your business that sets you apart. The quality of the raw materials you use could be the difference, or the skills that you have developed in your team. It may even be something as simple as where you're based. It doesn't matter what it is, but you need to identify what sets you apart.

No matter what you do, there is always something that makes you different. Your rebrand is the opportunity to take this, and use it as a tool to create a competitive advantage and make you the first choice for your customers.

## STEP SIX: WHAT'S YOUR MESSAGE?

Your message needs to grab the attention of your customers and tell them that you have the solution they're looking for. It's a statement that can be adapted for different situations, so that it's equally effective in print, in person or online.

Your purpose (See Step Two) provides the foundation, but you need to build on it. Think about how to include your values. Share what is that makes you different from your competitors. There's lots you can include, the challenge is how you blend all of the elements to create something that remains clear and compelling.

Whether you're delivering your message on a piece of packaging, at a networking event or through a post on social media, it needs to explain – in the simplest way possible – the benefit you provide to customers.

## STEP SEVEN: WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

A rebrand is about making changes to the way you communicate, but that doesn't mean you have to change everything. You only need to change what is necessary to help you get your message across, so you achieve your goal.

At the heart of any change is your visual identity – the raw materials of your communication. There are six elements to your visual identity; your logo, your typeface, your colour palette, your imagery, your language and your design style. To communicate better you might only need to make a simple change – swapping the colours you use, for example. Or it might be more significant. A fresh start; a blank canvas.

The scale of the change to your visual identity is usually linked to the scale of changes you are making to your business. To communicate a small change, you may only need to make minor adjustments to the existing elements of your visual identity. But if there have been significant changes to your business, you might feel that the best way to communicate that is through a more comprehensive change.





## STEP EIGHT: WHAT'S YOUR BUDGET?

In order to make the best use of your resources on your branding project, you need to know what resources are available before you start. A good place to start is the budget. How much money can you invest in your brand?

To understand how much you can spend, you need to consider the impact your rebrand will have on the business. Like any investment, you should expect to see a return on the budget you invest in your brand. If you've set a financial goal for the project, that should be easy: If your target is a 25% increase in turnover, what's that figure? Even if your goal is non-financial, you should still be able to put a value to it. If you want to increase the number of customers, what's the financial value of an average customer, across 12 months?

When you have that figure you are in position to make a decision. If this is the financial impact of a successful rebranding exercise, how much are you willing to invest, to achieve that return? That's your budget.

## STEP NINE: HOW WILL YOU REACH YOUR AUDIENCE?

When you've identified your target market, established your message and designed your visual identity, you need to bring your brand to life and deliver your message to them. This won't happen by accident. You need to plan it.

Creating a communication strategy will help you schedule what you need to do over the next 12 months - and when - in order to achieve your goal. You can identify special occasions and seasonal events that will influence customer behaviour. With these focal points you can plan your marketing activity, to make the most efficient use of your resources.

In addition to specific campaigns, you also have the more mundane, everyday opportunities to engage your audience. Every phone call. Every email. Every product you sell. Each of these is an opportunity to bring your brand to life.

## STEP TEN: WAS IT SUCCESSFUL?

The aim of your rebranding project is to achieve your goal. In order to assess whether you have succeeded, you need to measure your progress – not just at the end, but as you move towards it.

What you measure will depend on your goal, but reviewing your progress each month is probably a good start. If your goal is to increase turnover by 25% in the next 12 months, you might want to set interim goals of a minimum increase of 2% each month. If you're struggling to achieve this, as the months progress, it's an indication that you might need to make some changes to your communication strategy. By identifying what's not working, you can adapt your strategy and stop wasting resources. In this way you are far more likely to achieve your goal.

This activity is where your rebranding project evolves into brand management. Brand management is the on-going review and assessment of your communication strategy, to measure the impact it's having on your business.

# WHAT NEXT?

Hopefully this guide has given you some insight into how to rebrand your business, when the time is right.

If you think a rebrand is right for your business, I'd recommend that you start with step one, and set a goal. When you've got a clear picture of the outcome you'd like to achieve, everything you need to do to get there becomes a lot clearer.

The aim of this guide is to give you a framework to follow, but if you'd like some advice on turning these 10 steps into practical actions, please get in touch. We're always interested in talking to ambitious businesses!



## ABOUT ME

I'm a brand specialist. I work with ambitious businesses, to help them communicate more clearly, in print, in person and online.

I've been working in design and communication for almost 30 years. Over that time I've developed a strong understanding of brand strategy and how it can create competitive advantage for organisations. A lot of the work I do is with business leaders, helping them to understand the role of their brand in achieving their business goals.

The aim of this guide is to share some my experience, and answer some of the questions you will have. If you want to know more about rebranding, and what it could do for your business, do get in touch. It would be great to hear from you.

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