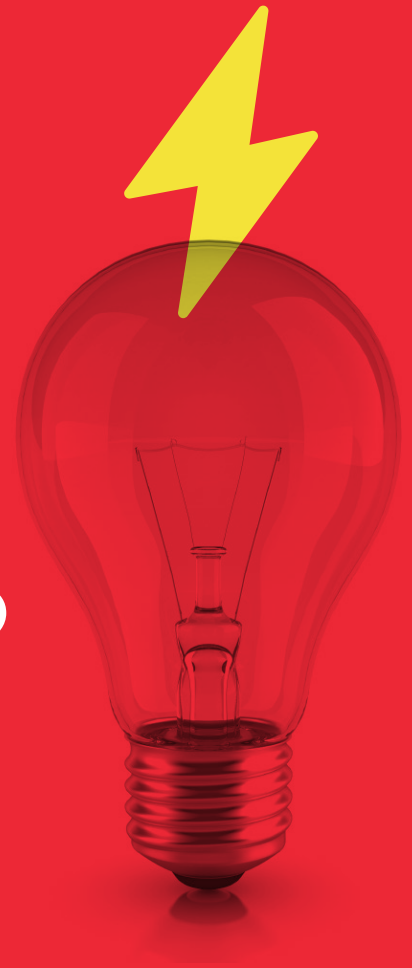


# Deciding to **Rebrand?**



**10**

Questions to help you  
determine if now's the time.

# [ What exactly is rebranding? ]

Rebranding is the process of changing a significant element of a company's brand. It can involve the adoption of a new name, logo and/or identity or a shift in messaging to communicate a brand promise that's more relevant to the times or competitive landscape.

Whatever the extent or reason for rebranding, it's extremely important to a company — and it needs to be done right, with careful forethought and execution. Most importantly, it involves a thorough commitment by everyone involved.

**Why do companies rebrand?** There are actually a variety of possible reasons — some being proactive and some being reactive. The 10 questions on the following page highlight valid reasons to consider a rebranding. (You'll note that "Are you bored with your current brand?" isn't one of the questions.)

Give the questions careful thought. Remember, rebranding is a strategic opportunity, the chance to make changes to your brand to strengthen your competitive advantage.

## 1

### Have your customers changed?

Founded in England more than 150 years ago, **Burberry** makes high-end raincoats and fashion accessories known for their iconic black, tan and red check pattern. But when the high-end fashion brand started becoming associated with gang members in England, Burberry's creative director decided it needed a new look. The company also hired high-profile celebrities like Kate Moss and actress Emma Watson to promote its fashion line. The rebranding has paid off royally. Sales have risen exponentially and the brand has regained its luxury status.

Image via Gallery Nucleus



## Have their expectations changed?

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A change in customer perspective about your brand — or your industry category — can be an important reason to consider rebranding. For example, when the press started highlighting the potential health risks of too much sugar in kids' breakfast cereals during the 1980s, **Kellogg's** made the decision to rebrand the cereal Sugar Smacks as Honey Smacks. For the same reason, the company changed the name of Sugar Frosted Flakes to Frosted Flakes. A greater focus on healthy eating was also a key reason Kentucky Fried Chicken rebranded as **KFC** in the 1990s.



## Has your brand story changed?

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Recognized traditionally as a leader in package delivery, **UPS** wanted to move beyond that offering. The company invested heavily in additional technologies and solutions to provide everything from supply chain management to financial and retail services, and embarked on a total rebranding to reposition itself "as the critical nerve center for global commerce". The company has since embraced a streamlined logo and a new marketing campaign centered on the tagline "We [Heart] Logistics," an ongoing effort to position itself as an innovative, technology-driven company that's different than FedEx.



## Has the competition changed?

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Due to recent competition from other domestic carriers, **Southwest Airlines** is no longer the low cost leader among U.S. airlines and has received some media criticism for that. In an effort to shift the focus to an area where the airline still shines, the company just underwent a major rebranding effort. A new logo featuring a multicolored heart, and an advertising campaign centered on the theme "Without a heart it's just a machine" plays on the company's legacy of customer service — showcasing an airline that puts people first.

Image via Brand New





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## Have you outgrown your position?

When **FedEx** acquired Kinko's in 2004, the goal was for FedEx Kinko's to become a digitally linked network of one-stop stores for customers to make, print, pack, and ship anything. Four years later, FedEx ditched the Kinko's in the name and replaced it with "Office". FedEx found that Kinko's was an "old" brand, associated with copies and therefore too limiting — at a time when digital technology was transforming the quick-print business and FedEx wanted to capitalize on this to offer a broad range of digital printing services.

Image via CA South

6

## Is your brand considered old-hat?

Ford's luxury division, **Lincoln Motor Company**, had become a stodgy automotive brand eclipsed by brands like Acura and Lexus. Over the past two years, the automaker has spent millions of dollars to counteract that "old fogey" image, with new car designs and a comprehensive branding campaign aimed at a younger, hipper audience. One of the flagship car models, the Lincoln MKZ sedan has been totally reimagined, and an advertising campaign centered on the theme "Hello, Again" aims to associate the revitalized brand with creative figures in other fields.

7

## Is your identity outdated?

You can tell when a logo was designed several years ago. Today's graphics just aren't the same as they were 10 or 20 years ago. While there's something to be said for the trust an established brand enjoys with consumers, an old logo can make your company look out of touch. So if think your identity looks dated compared to your competition — or people are starting to tell you so — maybe it's time to consider a refresh, just like **Netflix** has done recently.

# 8

## Has your name become a problem?

Negative publicity can be an important impetus to rebrand. For example, Andersen Consulting renamed itself **Accenture** after its parent company Arthur Andersen (which it later broke away from) was involved in the scandal surrounding the collapse of Enron. And more recently the Isis Wallet, a financial services app that allows customers to make in-store purchases with their smartphones, had to change their name to **Softcard** because of the awful news surrounding the Isis militant group in Iraq and Syria.

# 9

## Has your company structure changed?

A merger, acquisition, or total company reorganization can necessitate a rebranding. Unfortunately, this often results in long unwieldy names like **Pricewaterhouse Coopers** (the merger of two accounting firms Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand) and **Bank of New York Mellon** (the merger of two financial institutions, Bank of New York and Mellon Financial Corporation). Simplicity is better. For example, when the British pharmaceutical giants, Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beckham, merged to form **GlaxoSmithKline**, the new company's logo helped simplify the branding with the initials GSK.

# 10

## Has your product changed?

If your company is entering a new line of business or introducing new products, a rebranding effort might be necessary. For example, **Apple** was originally known as Apple Computer. But as the company evolved into new lines of business beyond computers, the original name became too limiting. The company originally named "Bell's Burgers" became **Taco Bell** when its founder Glen Bell realized he couldn't compete with other burger chains like McDonald's. He looked at all the chopped meat he had purchased and decided to shove it into taco shells.

Image via GalleryHip.com

# [ So what are the next steps? ]

Once you make the decision to rebrand your company, there are a lot of steps that are involved. And an experienced branding firm like ours can help make a complex process less daunting. But the most important thing to remember is to make sure you explain the reasons for the rebranding to your customers. Figure out a way to make rebranding an opportunity to improve your relationship with your

target audiences. Position the rebranding as a way to serve them better. Social media is an ideal platform to engage in a dialog about this. With the right thinking you can make rebranding a strategic advantage.

If you decide now's not the right time to rebrand, you may be ready to reconsider it in the near future. Those ten questions will always provide valuable perspective.

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### Thinking of rebranding? Contact us.

At Partners & Harrison, we've had a wealth of experience helping companies in a broad range of industries — from consumer tech to financial services to healthcare — reposition themselves for success. Our pedigree includes brands like Apple, Citibank, IBM, Motorola and Timex, to name just a few.