Finishing Your Rebranding

In my last column I began a discussion of “when and how a small business should rebrand their business”. The column started with determining if one should consider rebranding. I list several situations. Then if the answer is “yes”, I presented what I see as the first two steps of this process: 1) To rebrand your business, start by asking yourself the right questions about your business, your products or services, and your customers. Then, 2) Defining your small business in enough detail to be able to formulate how you will position your brand in relation to the competition. So, now let’s complete the process.

I see the next phase of rebranding to be where you update the visual identity of your brand, including logo, colors and fonts. Think of this as an evolution, not a revolution. You may want to keep some elements of your old logo, such as colors or images, to remain true to your brand’s history while still keeping it current and fresh. Do a complete visual rebranding only if you made significant changes to your business that you want to convey to the marketplace.

In developing your brand’s new visual identity, you should consider:

✓ What are the attributes of your brand as a product?
✓ What are the attributes of your brand as an organization?
✓ What are the attributes of your brand as a person?
✓ What are the attributes of your brand as a symbol?

During this part of the process you should be asking yourself:

1. How do I currently use my logo? On signage, marketing materials, packaging?
2. Which visual elements would I like to keep, and which would I like to change?
3. What tone of voice do I use in my marketing materials? Is it friendly, casual, professional, formal?
4. What do I envision as my brand’s personality? Is it family-oriented, hip, friendly, serious, youthful? If my brand was a celebrity personality, who would it be and why?

Because I know that I don’t have great skills in this area, I always suggest that you work with a professional graphic designer to develop your new logo and any other visual marketing elements your rebranding requires. In addition to how well possible logos convey your new brand identity, consider how well the logo will translate to a variety of formats, such as a large store sign, in-store product packaging, or a thumbnail image online.
At this point your rebranding is almost complete. Now, how do you let everyone know about your new brand? This could be called the “implementation” stage. The following steps will enhance and express your brand in the marketplace:

- Ensure that your new logo and other brand identity elements are used widely and consistently across all customer touch points. Consistency is key to getting your brand message across.

- Develop standards for customer service that expresses your brand’s core values and personality.

- Make sure that any new products or services that you add, as well as their names, packaging and marketing collateral, are in line with your brand.

- Use social media, your business website and other marketing materials to educate your target market about your brand.

- Connect with customers in your community by participating in organizations, activities and events that align with your brand.

When you are all done, you may ask how will you know if your rebranding effort is successful?

My answer to that is simple. Getting feedback from your target customers is the best way to find out. You can conduct formal surveys or informally ask customers what your brand means to them and what they think of your rebranding. You’d be surprised at how willing most people are to share their opinions.

Act on customer feedback to adjust how you express your brand. Remember, branding is a marathon, not a sprint— but when done correctly, it is a long-term investment that supports all of your other marketing efforts.

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