



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO B2B RE-BRANDING

Stand out for the right reasons

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In order to stand out from the competition in a crowded global marketplace, brand managers are constantly refining and curating their company's brand story, philosophy and project execution.

While behemoth brands come with equally large marketing budgets to allocate on brand communications, we always stress that you cannot simply buy a brand position or promise. Brands are built and cultivated over many years, and there are many factors that play into their success.

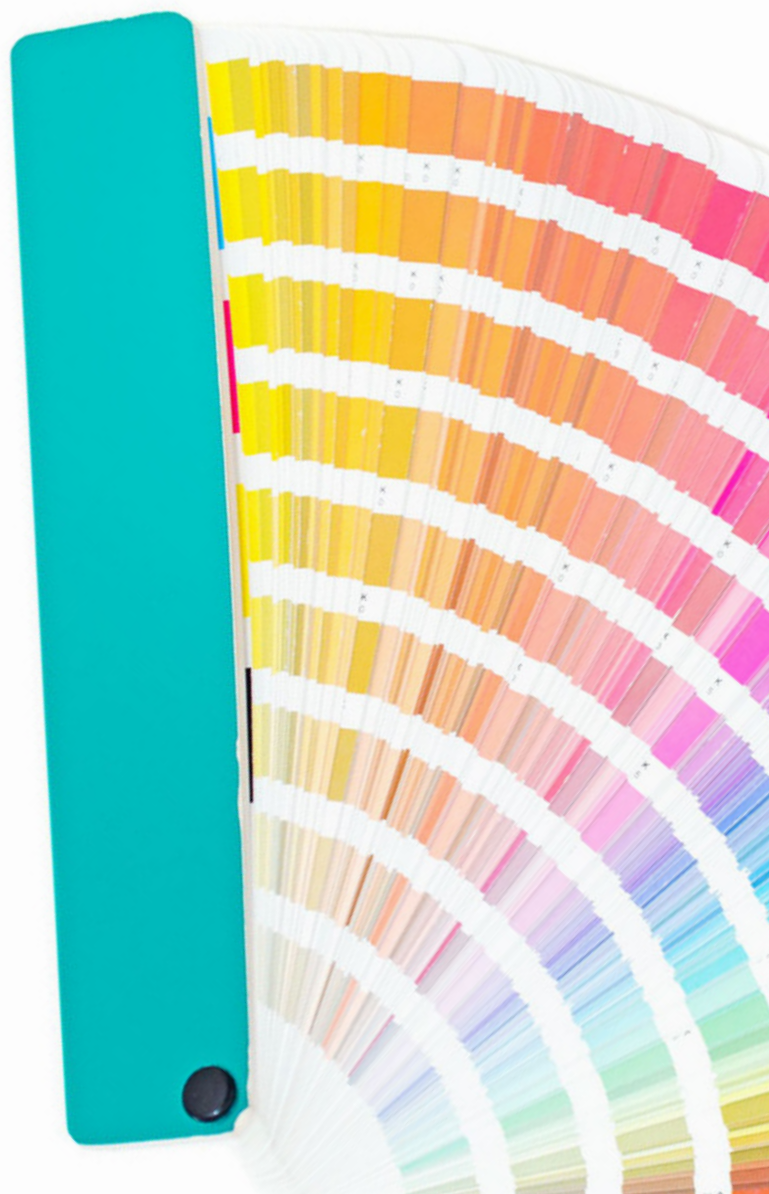
So what should you know when you're looking into a re-brand? In this guide we'll outline everything from the basics to the less obvious components.

Why a Brand Matters

Though your company might not have a dedicated brand strategist, simply by virtue of the fact that you have a business name and provide a product or service means that you are a brand capable of being perceived a certain way by your target market. You might as well take the reins and control this perception as much as you can. To manage your brand, you must start with a solid brand foundation.

A solid brand foundation does the following for your organization:

- Communicates to your clients that your business understands their needs
- Explains to clients why your business stands out from the competition
- Helps clients remember your business' unique traits
- Informs your employees about exactly what your company stands for which assists in their daily business decision-making



What Makes a B2B Brand?

Your brand is more than just your logo or your tagline. It's about the internal and external environment of your business—and how you choose to communicate within it. Everything your business does and says reflects on your brand—so it's important to maximize its potential.

We break these components into two categories: tangible and intangible.

Tangible Assets

Logo & Tagline

A well-crafted logo and tagline starts the baseline perception of your brand. It drives home your brand promise and uniqueness. What's important to remember is it is not the be-all-end-all for a brand—it's simply an anchor for the ship.

Name & Trademark

Trademarking your name, logo and key visual assets are a critical step in solidifying and protecting your brand identity. While many businesses will work to trademark name and logo, it's important to think of other key assets such as unique products, services and other valuable assets so your entire business is safeguarded.

Messaging

While undergoing a re-brand, you should be revisiting mission and vision statements. Ask yourself if tone, verbiage and audience are still appropriately addressed in the current messaging. This messaging should trickle down into everything your business uses to communicate with clients, from brochures to daily emails.

Our Creative Principal's Tips to Building a Brand

- Don't overthink it—too much indecision can cause brand confusion
- Choose brand messaging that will last—taking into account new products, audiences, acquisitions and more.
- Logos, taglines, and mission statements don't need to say everything
- Keep messaging consistent on all platforms

Website

Today, a well designed website is worth its weight in gold. Data shows that if a user doesn't like your website, it's an indication to them that the company doesn't care. Consider what your website says about your brand by visiting it with your ideal client in mind. Or better yet, visit with a specific goal in mind to gauge user experience.

Collateral

From business cards to billboards, your marketing and sales collateral reflect your brand. Key visual components, such as color, typography, style of photography and logos on collateral, should always be consistent. This means no logos stretched across a presentation slide or sticking to a limited color palette. It may seem nit-picky, but these mistakes often translate to your audience as unprofessional and lazy. Keep in mind, branding is all about repetition, the more consistent your brand is represented, the more likely it will be "branded" in the minds of the audience.

Office Design

This goes beyond the "open space" office debate. Building a professional, branded setting for your employees doesn't just boost morale—it communicates to prospective clients that you're a credible firm to do business with. Even as a one-person consulting business, branding a home office or renting a small office space sends a positive message.



Intangible Assets

Company Culture

There are no shortcuts here—the company culture you build will be the culture your clients perceive. Your audience and strategic partners like to see the expertise within your business and how much you value it. That doesn't always mean posting funny staff photos or publishing information about holiday parties. Company culture can be communicated in daily appreciations, success stories and even your office design and environment.

Industry Expectations

While company culture is important, there are certainly parameters put on your brand based on the industry. It's important to acknowledge these expectations, but also think what about your business makes you different. For example, corporate financial firms face industry-specific rules and regulations, so instead of harping on "compliance" as a main brand trait, focus on customer service, staff expertise or other unique service offerings.

Customer Service

Customer service is often the most overlooked, yet most important, part of a brand. It's at the frontlines, and for larger companies customer service is the only time a client will hear from your business. Ignoring processes and failing to improve in customer service is a quick way to lose your brand position.

Customer Experience

Tied closely with customer service, customer experience is the sum of every touch point a client has with your business. This includes discovering your service, the purchase/sales process, and future customer cultivation. Your brand should remain consistent during a customer's experience and if elements are changing (e.g. logo redesign, merger, client point of contact), communication is key to ensure their experience remains positive.

Employee Training

Every employee of your business should know how to handle a current client's needs and questions in a professional manner. Employee training can also add an additional layer of education on the brand. Teaching aspects such as tone, unique value proposition and core values empowers your employees outside of the office to effectively represent your brand.

Once Your Brand is Established

Once you have your intangible and tangible assets established, we have three golden rules to maintaining that brand integrity.

Clarity

Develop a clear and concise message about what your brand stands for, its internal values and attitude, and how you are different from your competitors. Develop a brand guide that outlines every detail of your branding elements (visual, tonal and identity).

Unity

Make sure that each department in your business is educated about the importance of a unified brand strategy and that every department understands how their piece fits into the whole of your company's brand identity.

Consistency

Check in regularly with each department to ensure that the elements of your brand are being implemented on a consistent basis across all platforms. A slip in one area can create confusion among clients and can chip away at your unified brand message.



Threats to a Brand

Even with everything in alignment, there are daily threats that can quickly dilute your brand promise. These threats range from uncontrolled sources, such as new competition, to new internal strategies and tactics. Here are some to look out for.

SEO

Today's intense focus on keywords and Google algorithm updates results in brands rewording their messaging irregularly, without evaluation of their current brand promise and long-term goals. In the end, it's diluting overall branding instead of supporting. Have a clear idea of your brand foundation and implement an SEO strategy that helps the bots, but doesn't confuse customers.

Lack of Internal Buy-In

We recommend keeping branding project decision makers down to a group of five or fewer key individuals, which will invariably leave others out. Revealing a new brand image to an already established company can have its difficulties. It's recommended to start communication early in the process, reminding employees that the changes will improve the business—not hurt.

Unfavorable Reviews

Handling tough feedback is hard. Handling public feedback is even harder. These reviews must be addressed uniformly with your brand messaging. Brand training should teach every employee how to handle negative feedback.

Negative Press

A much feared threat to a brand. Proper public relations can handle the outside influencers, while internal training and communication can drive home your brand promise to current clients.

Poor Customer Service

Negative customer experiences can wreak havoc on a brand. Yet, so few businesses think their customer service is performing well as long as their customers aren't complaining. But even minor occurrences, such as a poor website user experience, long hold times or delayed follow up sends a message that you don't value your current customers.

Bad Employee Culture

It's unfortunate when a business preaches one thing, but does something different. Don't assume everything that happens within your company's walls stays there—prospective customers can pick up on the negative vibes.

Ready to start your brand redesign?
For more insight into redesigning
your brand, visit the [Bop Blog](#).

