

TARKENTON

IDEAS AT WORK

Does Your Brand Need a New Look?

Takeaways

- Make sure there's a strategic purpose to your visual rebrand.
- Remember that visuals reflect what your company represents.
- Use your visual rebrand as an opportunity to reinforce relationships and drive growth.

If you're a sports fan, you understand the power of a visual brand. When I see the right shade of purple or the right horn shape, I immediately think of the Vikings; the right shade of blue, the Giants. There's the black "G" of my alma mater, the University of Georgia. We all recognize the pinstripes and interlocking "NY" of the Yankees, or the red Chicago Bulls logo.

But even the most iconic teams have changed over time. Teams brighten or darken their colors; add or remove secondary colors; redesign imagery; change fonts. It's no different for businesses, who make changes to better reach their audience.

This article from one of our close strategic partners is a smart discussion about the thinking you need to do *first*, before you decide on a rebrand for your company, and then how you can do it right. Don't miss this one!



Jon Tarkenton

Does Your Brand Need a New Look?

"New Year, new you" is not just a popular slogan for fitness centers. Many businesses choose to unveil a new look at the start of the year, too. But how do you decide if a visual make-over really makes sense, and how do you ensure that your new look will translate into higher sales and greater customer satisfaction?

A new logo can sound exciting, but it is also fraught with risk. And it's not just your logo; visual rebranding can also involve new colors, new website design, new social media profiles, and more. Your brand's visuals must reflect and reinforce your company's unique identity. Ideally, your visual brand reflects, in some way, your "story" – a nod to the legacy of how it all began. Your visuals should also evoke emotion, creating a connection between you and your customer. Think of how you feel when you hear an old, favorite song or how a particular smell can bring back a wave of memories. That's the power of your visuals. They tell a story, they reflect your legacy, they evoke strong emotions that resonate with your customers.

In other words, changing the look might seem cosmetic, but it is actually strategic. Which means opportunity... and risk.

When Does a Visual Rebrand Make Sense?

There are several very good reasons for visually rebranding – and a few bad reasons as well. To determine whether or not you should even bother with a visual rebrand, ask yourself the following questions:



- Are customers having trouble distinguishing us from our competitors in the marketplace?
- Do team members feel disconnected from our visual identity?
- Is our visual branding difficult to adapt or awkward on social media and digital platforms?
- As our company has grown, updated what we offer, and tweaked what works, have we failed to accurately reflect those changes in the visuals our company uses?
- Does our visual branding look dated (not just traditional or timeless, but out-of-date)?
- Do we want to highlight a particular product or a new service, or to emphasize a specific strength of our company in light of new market conditions or new competitors?

If you are just changing your visuals because someone is bored with the current design or you are trying to copy a competitor, hit the pause button. But if you answer "yes" to any of the questions above, visual rebranding could be a great idea. In addition to attracting new customers, a visual rebrand can communicate to your existing customers why you should still be their #1 choice – and a great way to excite and motivate your internal team.

Visual Rebranding Done Right

Once you've made the strategic decision to visually rebrand, you must ensure those changes are well received, both by your existing customers and your target market. Here are the keys to doing visual rebranding right:

1

First, remember that visuals are a living, breathing reflection of what your company represents.

While you may design a brand new logo, with different colors, fonts, and icons, your new look must still be an accurate expression of your underlying brand. That means a design that echoes your company's identity, style, and values.

2

Sometimes evolution is better than revolution.

Rather than throwing out everything about your old visuals and starting from scratch, try keeping some connection with your previous visual brand. Perhaps you use the same main color, but add a new accent color? Perhaps you keep the same colors, but use a totally different font? Perhaps you add a new icon to an existing wordmark.

3

Keep the customer in mind.

The job of the visual branding is to connect with customers, to attract them to you, based on the perfect match of their needs and your product/service. As you design a new look, make sure it will still resonate with your customers, both current and future.

4

Look up-to-date but not trendy.

Visual rebranding can signal that you have a pulse on current best practices. If you showcase you are ahead of the curve, your customers will know you can keep them ahead of the curve. However, visuals that only represent a current fad will outdate themselves quickly, costing you money and the viability of your brand. Can the visuals representing your company survive more than one iteration of a fad?

5

Digital first.

Today, everyone sees your business through a mobile lens. Today's avatar was yesterday's billboard on Main Street. It's no longer physical landmarks that attract an audience but trending social media hashtags. Your branding has to "fit" the social media space and have the versatility to adapt to different mediums.

The Business Leader's Role in Visual Rebranding

A business leader is not a graphic designer, and your role is not to choose color palettes or design logos. But you do have a critical role in protecting and promoting your brand. That means making sure the visual identity is a powerful and true representation of your underlying brand. Tell the story of the company to the design team, so they reflect the essential nature of your brand in the new design. You also know your customer better than they do, so share that insight with the designers before they start work on a visual rebrand.

Even after the design work is done, one more question remains: how and when to unveil your new look? Of course, if there is a landmark event in your business, a merger/acquisition, anniversary, or a headquarters change, those events offer a great opportunity to introduce your visual rebranding. Even if there is no obvious external “news hook,” rolling out a visual rebrand is an opportunity – as long as it's done thoughtfully and carefully. Be sure your internal team is aware of the new look before you share it with the outside world. Establish a timeline when the visual rebranding should be launched. You can even use the relaunch as a publicity and marketing opportunity for your company, if you plan ahead.

A new look can infuse new energy and growth into your business. But you must be sensitive to the brand and the history it represents. It was not built overnight. It took people, ideas, and time to make it great. Business leaders must protect the essential elements of the brand, while steering the evolution of the brand to reflect new marketplace realities, new customer demands, and new developments within the company. A visual rebrand that accommodates both the best of the old with the promise of the new can yield tremendous benefits now and in the future.

Tarkenton and Liger have worked together to help many companies navigate the opportunities and risks of rebranding; [let us know](#) if we can help you evaluate whether a visual rebrand makes sense for you.



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As Creative Director at Liger, a dynamic full-service marketing firm in Atlanta, Sandra oversees a talented team of designers and copywriters. She ensures that their creative outputs align with client objectives and push the boundaries of innovation and quality. Sandra holds a Bachelor of Fine Art from Purchase College, SUNY.