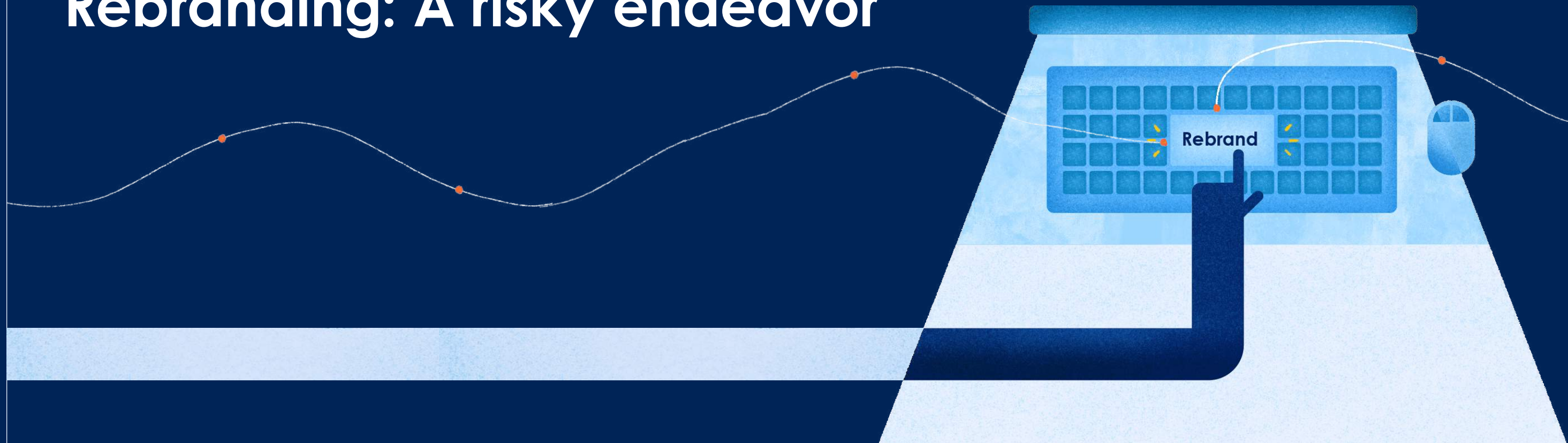


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Rebranding: A risky endeavor



Let's start with a reality check—rebrands are often not the success stories we hope they will be.

They tend to cost more than budgeted, take longer than expected, and drive less business impact than envisioned. And yet each year, thousands of businesses—driven by mergers, compromised reputations, and the allure of new markets—decide to rebrand anyway.

The good news is that with the right planning, vision, and launch strategy, brands can be confident in the success of their efforts. It all comes down to having the right activation strategy—a way to take the ideas and concepts behind your brand and roll them out at scale.

In fact, almost 7 out of 10 (69%) of full-time employees said that updating all of their company content would be one of the most challenging aspects of rebranding, and 39% have put it off due to a lack of resources.

Templafy has helped drive some of the most transformative rebrands of the last decade. And, though we hate to admit it, we've seen first hand what happens when a rebrand flops spectacularly.

Through this experience, we've codified some lessons learned about what a rebrand needs to succeed. Now it's time to share what we've learned.

This isn't an exhaustive list. After all, as a company started in the Nordics, we're

minimalist by nature.

Instead, these are the most critical elements that have been present in every success and absent in nearly all failures.

Whether you're a CMO itching to transform your brand, a marketing or branding professional tasked with executing a shift in visual identity, or a CEO trying to decide if the investment is worth it, we hope this guide will serve as a set of core principles to help guide your journey.

These are the things that, in our opinion, every brand leader should know.



Data source: Templafy research

Data in this guide is based on results from a survey commissioned by Templafy. An online survey of 2,296 adult full-time employees in the US, UK, Germany, and Australia was conducted between December 2021 and January 2022. The maximum margin of sampling error was +/- 4 percentage points with a 95 percent level of confidence.

Align on the why: agree on business objectives, target market, and the need for a change

The rebrand graveyard is filled with examples of campaigns that were never properly aligned with core business objectives.

A rebrand is an investment in your company's future. And like any investment, there is an associated risk. So before beginning down the path to rebranding, you first need to know: is the risk worth it?

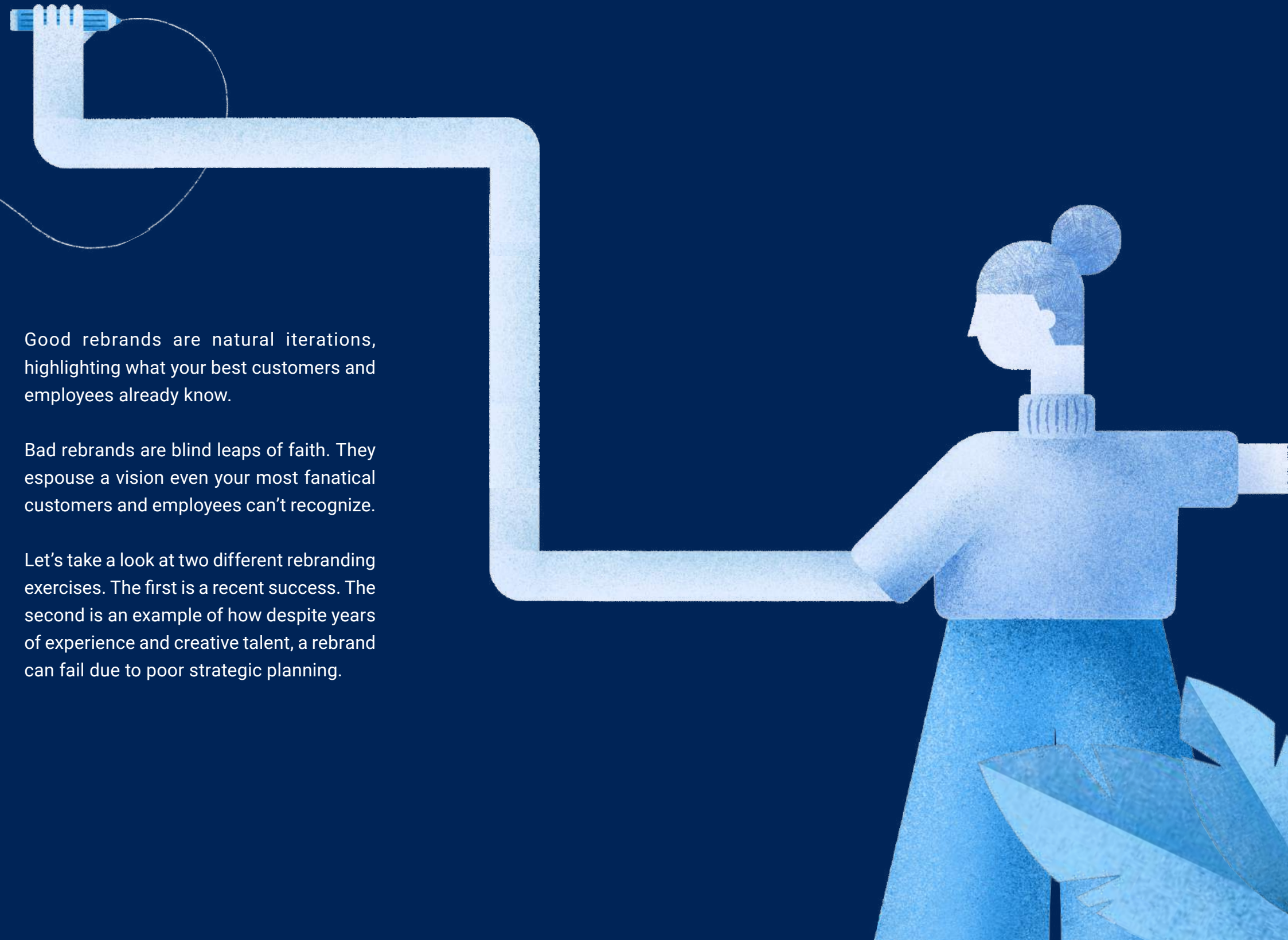
Your customers already have a relationship with your product or service. Even if it's an imperfect relationship, there's no guarantee a new brand will enhance this connection.

If your goal is to attract new customers, remember that rebranding runs the risk of alienating existing customers in the process.

Good rebrands are natural iterations, highlighting what your best customers and employees already know.

Bad rebrands are blind leaps of faith. They espouse a vision even your most fanatical customers and employees can't recognize.

Let's take a look at two different rebranding exercises. The first is a recent success. The second is an example of how despite years of experience and creative talent, a rebrand can fail due to poor strategic planning.



Align on the why: agree on business objectives, target market, and the need for a change

Rebrand success: Gong strikes a positive note in the market

In its simplest form, Gong creates call recording software for sales reps and their managers. When calls are recorded, sales reps can better prepare for subsequent calls without taking notes. Managers can review calls in an asynchronous manner, improving oversight and helping with coaching and mentoring.

Gong was a success with sales reps and first-line managers from the start.

Over time, it became clear that the insights Gong gathered could be used for more than just sales rep development. The same toolset, if managed properly, could help drive more accurate forecasting and better resource allocation—moving it into the realm of CROs and CEOs.

Before 2021, Gong's brand was purposefully casual and fun, speaking directly to its existing user base. But when the company pivoted to target more members of the C-suite, the marketing team knew they needed a new visual identity to match.

It was time for a rebrand.

The opportunity was clear: communicating better with senior stakeholders would allow Gong to solve bigger business problems and command higher prices.

The risk they faced, however, was that their new brand would be too professional, too formal, alienating the sales reps and managers whose loyalty had made the company a success up until that point.

The result—which included a new logo, color scheme, illustration style, and more—was a success, blending Gong's startup roots with its raised ambitions. Perhaps the secret to that success was starting the process by defining the company's desired new position in the market.

Udi Ledergor, Chief Marketing Officer at Gong, wrote about **starting the rebranding process** with a new mission statement:

"Gong was fast becoming the eyes and ears of revenue leaders everywhere, giving them deep insight into their funnel and team activities...To properly capture this recent success and project it powerfully up market, Gong refocused its mission statement to better articulate its value and passion."

Rebrand learnings: Unpeeling Tropicana's new packaging

On the other side of the spectrum, Tropicana—an orange juice brand owned by Pepsi-co—rebranded its products in 2009 to a sour effect.

In an effort to modernize its visual identity, Tropicana hired an agency (to the tune of \$35 million) to come up with a new campaign, including product packaging.

The results were not as they hoped: Tropicana **lost \$20 million in sales** in the first month, ultimately forcing them to revert to their original design.

Neil Campbell, President at Tropicana North America, explained how it **all went wrong**:

"We underestimated the deep emotional bond they had with the original packaging...what we didn't get was the passion this very loyal small group of consumers have. That wasn't something that came out in the research...Those consumers are very important to us, so we responded."

Whether it was a failure of research or a failure of creative execution, Tropicana missed the mark—and it all boils down to not having a strong "why."

Why would having a more modern, edgy design sell more orange juice?

Without clarity at this level, rebrands are less of an investment and more of a gamble.

Align on the **how**: create a unique brand strategy, voice, and visual identity

As Tropicana and Gong both showed, the external markers of your brand—imagery, messaging, colors, logos, and all the creative elements that win ad agencies awards—are hugely important.

They're also hugely individual.

We're not going to tell you what your brand should look or sound like. However, we can help point you toward excellent resources to help you work through the process of developing a new brand strategy, voice, and visual identity.

Crowdspring, a popular design agency, notes that "A strong brand identity doesn't happen magically overnight. You can't randomly pick some colors and fonts, add a generic logo, and create a brand identity. You must approach brand identity strategically and build an identity that reflects your brand."¹

Column Five Media advises all businesses to first "understand who you truly are and use your beliefs and values to guide your decisions in ways that are better for your people, your business, and the future."²

Hubspot finds "that users who feel a connection to a brand spend twice as much money as those who don't,"³ and RingCentral advises that a unique brand voice can "help you attract the right audience, form deeper connections with your prospects, and make customers more loyal to your brand."⁴

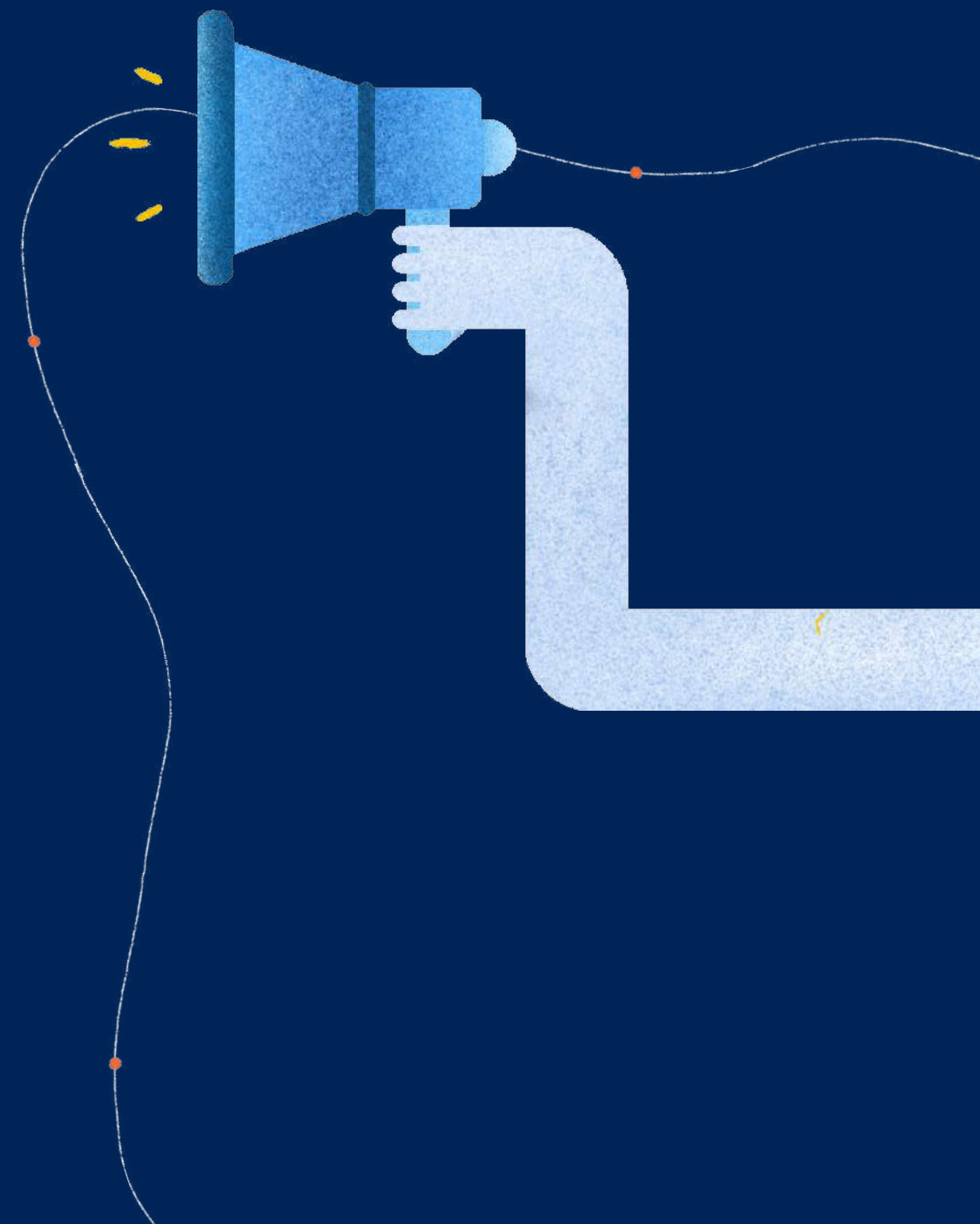


Make it **pop** specific

One piece of advice (we can't help ourselves): be specific. When defining your brand, try to avoid empty words like "modern," "edgy," "youthful," or "sexy."

These words, so ubiquitously overused, convey almost nothing and will yield frustrating results, both during your creative process and once your rebrand rolls out.

Instead, take the time to get specific on what your brand represents, and use that to inspire a visual universe unique to your company.



¹crowdspring.com/blog/brand-identity/#designing-your-brand-identity
²columnfivemedia.com/how-to-create-a-brand-strategy/
³blog.hubspot.com/marketing/branding
⁴expresswriters.com/how-to-create-brand-voice-guidelines/

Align on the what: launch the most impactful brand elements first

Not every element in a rebrand carries equal weight.

A successful rebrand requires strategic prioritization to make sure the most important brand interactions feel an immediate impact.

So which customer, employee, and partner touchpoints are most vital for your business?

Rebrand success: Sweetgreen makes rebranding its main course

Sweetgreen, an American fast casual restaurant primarily serving salads, rebranded with positive effect in 2021.

Their rebranding campaign focused on two core areas of their business: its digital presence, including website, mobile app, and social channels; and its in-store experience, including signage, packaging, and uniforms.

Customers purchase salads either by placing an order directly with an employee in the restaurant, or by ordering online. Sweetgreen knew that those two customer flows had to transform seamlessly and in parallel, or people would be confused and potentially turn elsewhere for their salad fix.

On the other hand, internal materials like presentations, emails, and business documents are less impactful for customers, so they weren't given the same priority level. And that's how it should be!

Sweetgreen's rebrand launched with "what" mattered most, and the results speak for themselves.

Rebrand learnings: A cautionary tale from a consultancy

A few years ago, a large consulting firm rebranded in an attempt to become a meaningful player in the ever-growing digital transformation consultancy market.

Their new branding was impressive, effectively presenting a "digital-first" image. They updated their website and launched a splashy ad campaign that aired during golf tournaments.

What they missed, however, was enabling their employees to leverage the new brand in customer interactions. Years after the rebrand was announced, customer-facing employees had not been equipped with updated email signatures or PowerPoint templates.

Life would be a lot more fun if more consulting business were done exclusively at golf tournaments, but the truth is business is cemented through ongoing communication via digital touch points—all of which reflect on the quality and perceived value of the brand.

That communication depends on having a brand that is properly activated through all business content, which in turn enables every employee to act as a brand ambassador.

This is "what" the firm got wrong. They didn't focus first on the 20% of collateral that drives their revenue, and they're still cleaning up their rebrand to this day.



Rebrand with confidence

One of the most important parts of the rebranding process is also one of the least discussed.

If a new brand—logo, visuals, messages—is perfectly aligned to business objectives, but never makes it to the customer, will it have an impact? Obviously not.

Whether you're Sweetgreen and need employees to trade in their old uniforms for new ones, or a consulting firm and need employees to adopt new PowerPoint templates, the process is the same: eliminate the old and replace it with the new.

The difference is that throwing out old uniforms is easy (relatively).

But if you have thousands of employees, getting them to stop using the templates and materials for all of their existing business documents is a lot harder.

So, how do you ensure widespread adoption of your brand, both internally and externally?

Freedom within a framework

The answer is by bringing the new materials right to where employees get their work done. It has to be easier to stay on-brand than to continue using outdated materials.

Just like you wouldn't expect Sweetgreen to tell its employees to drive out of their way to pick up a new uniform, companies shouldn't expect workers to search around in digital archives for new content.

In both cases, it is the company's responsibility—and in their own best interest—to find a way to integrate all of the newly rebranded company assets into existing employee workflows.

The alternative is to send out endless reminders and conduct ongoing reviews of all corporate content.

We don't believe in policing employees. It's not fun for workers and it's not efficient for companies.

Compliance is important. But freedom-within-a-framework is the only sustainable way to activate a new brand.

Brand activation: setting yourself up for success

Doing a full rebrand can have massive benefits, but it's important that you have a strategy and a plan in place to ensure the long term ROI of that exercise.

If you don't agree on why you're rebranding, how to create a unique brand identity, what your new brand includes, and when to roll it out, you're setting yourself up for failure.

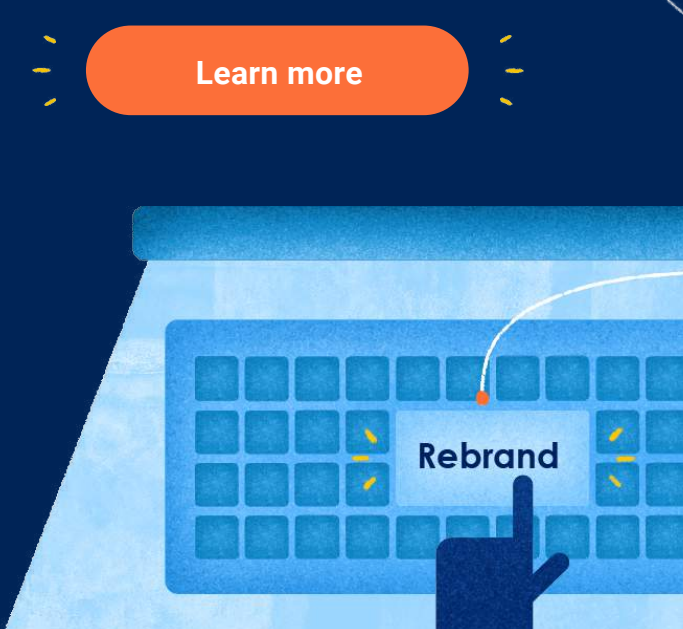
Your employees are your best ambassadors, but they're not equipped to present a unified picture of the new brand—without sacrificing productivity or efficiency in their daily workflow—then you're going to lose out on the intended positive impact of your new brand.

Today, 69% of employees admit to using Google to find brand assets, instead of internal company resources. During a large-scale rebrand, this is a recipe for disaster.

Whether this is your first time or your fiftieth going through a rebranding process, it's always a good idea to ensure that your work is powered and protected by a solution that activates your brand throughout the company by making it easier to stay on-brand than anything else.

Make staying on-brand easier than going off-brand

[Learn more](#)



References and Helpful Resources

How to Create a Brand Strategy (Free Guide & Toolkit) — Column Five Media

“Our brand strategy process is broken into three distinct parts. We guide you from your Brand Heart (the core of your brand), to the articulation of your Brand Messaging (how you talk about who you are), to your Visual Identity (the visual expression of your brand). By the end, you’ll have a full brand strategy, summed up in fresh brand guidelines to help you bring your brand to life.”

columnfivemedia.com/how-to-create-a-brand-strategy/

What is Brand Identity? And How to Create a Unique and Memorable One in 2022 — Crowdspring

“A strong brand identity doesn’t happen magically overnight. You can’t randomly pick some colors and fonts, add a generic logo, and create a brand identity. You must approach brand identity strategically and build an identity that reflects your brand.”

crowdspring.com/blog/brand-identity/#designing-your-brand-identity

The Ultimate Guide to Branding in 2022 — Hubspot

“Branding can be the deciding factor for consumers when they make a purchase decision. In fact, a Capgemini study found that users who feel a connection to a brand spend twice as much money as those who don’t.”

blog.hubspot.com/marketing/branding

How to Create Brand Voice Guidelines for Your Brand — Express Writers

“Creating brand voice guidelines helps guide and align your company voice with your goals, so it all meshes seamlessly. That way, every time your brand voice is used in content, on social media, on your website, and in emails and communications with your customers, it provides a great experience AND nudges you in the right direction, growth-wise.”

expresswriters.com/how-to-create-brand-voice-guidelines/

How to Create a Brand Voice Template in 4 Easy Steps — Ring Central

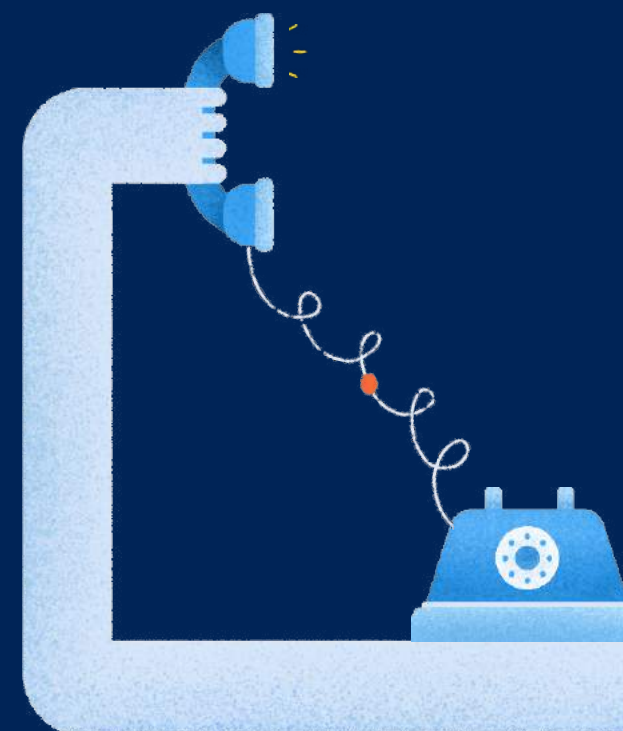
“Having a unique brand voice can help you attract the right audience, form deeper connections with your prospects, and make customers more loyal to your brand—but only if you create and use your brand voice the right way.”

ringcentral.com/us/en/blog/brand-voice-template/

How to create brand identity guidelines that improve your communications — Fabrik Brands

“Consistency is key to producing a strong brand identity. Often, transforming your business from an idea, into a household name, is something that requires careful attention-to-detail, and a strict focus on making the underlying essence of your brand feel familiar to your target customer.”

fabrikbrands.com/how-to-create-brand-identity-guidelines/



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