

GUIDE TO REBRANDING YOUR BUSINESS

INTRODUCTION

Your brand is a promise—the promise of the experience you commit to deliver to your customers. A strong brand helps differentiate you from the competition, create an emotional connection with your target market and build long-lasting relationships with your customers.

But sometimes, a business needs rebranding. If your business is facing any of the following situations, a rebrand might be right for you:

- Poor distinction from competition
- Poor market awareness of what you do
- Expansion or reduction of products/services/geographic region
- Acquisition/merger
- Current brand is dated
- Current brand has bad reputation
- Brand has become irrelevant
- Change in ownership/management

STEP 1: INQUIRY

To rebrand your business, start by asking yourself the right questions about your business, your products or services, and your customers.

Your business: Why do you do what you do?

- If you had to give an elevator pitch, how would you describe your business?
- What gave you the idea for your business?
- Why did you decide to become your own boss?
- What is your long-term vision for your business?
- What elements of your business would you like to keep/change?

Your products or services: What do you sell?

- What products or services do you offer?
- What makes them unique?
- Where does your product or service fall on the spectrum in terms of price, quality and speed?

REAL-LIFE REBRANDING

When Jennifer and Kevin Large bought Beautiwood, an unfinished furniture retailer in business for 55 years, they had big plans. The couple wanted to remodel the store, introduce new products and accessories, make the business eco-friendly, and use technology to improve customer service. It was time to rebrand.

**“YOUR BRAND IS
WHAT PEOPLE SAY
ABOUT YOU WHEN
YOU’RE NOT IN THE
ROOM.”**

—Jeff Bezos, Founder and
CEO of Amazon



KEY THEMES

By asking themselves the questions in Step 1, Jennifer and Kevin identified some consistent themes for Beautiwood's rebranding:

- **Established:** Family business (third generation, 55 years in business)
- **Quality:** Solid wood, experienced craftsmen, investment-quality products
- **Customization:** Option to buy unique, customized pieces
- **Personalized service:** Service with a personal, family touch from a business that is an integral part of the community
- **Eco-friendly:** Real, non-treated wood appeals to eco-conscious customers

Your customers: Who is buying?

- Who are your target customers?
- What are their core values?
- What is the percentage of repeat customers?
- What does market research show you about your customers?
- What are your customers happy about? What are they complaining about?
- What need do you fulfill for them?

STEP 2: FORMULATION

Next, you'll position your brand in relation to the competition.

- 1. Make a list of your competitors and regarding each one, ask yourself:**
What differentiates my business from this competitor? You may want to create a chart or spreadsheet for this.
- 2. Review that comparison list and ask yourself:** What are the unique attributes of my business and how do they benefit my customers?
- 3. It also helps to ask yourself what your brand is not.** Defining your brand in opposition to competitors can give you a clearer picture.
- 4. Using the information gathered so far, summarize:**
 - The best, most concise, distinct way to describe your product or service
 - Your target audience
 - The ultimate customer benefit

Condense this into one sentence to create your brand positioning statement:

(Company name) is the (frame of reference) whose (attributes) enables the (target audience) to (benefit).

- 5. Using your brand positioning statement, you can then create:**
 - **Your vision statement:** What is your ultimate goal or vision for your business?
 - **Your mission statement:** What is your ongoing mission?
 - **Value pillars:** What value do you deliver that differentiates your business from your competitors (for example, quality, customization, customer service)?

BRAND POSITIONING

After completing Step 2, Jennifer and Kevin identified some consistent themes for Beautiwood's rebranding:

- 1. Quality:** Handcrafted furniture built with years of expertise, using sustainable materials and methods
- 2. Customization:** Turning furniture into a piece of art to fit the owner's preferences
- 3. Customer Service:** Friendly approach; family-run with a personal touch

Pulling together their product description, product differentiators, target customers and customer benefits, they developed their brand positioning statement:

Beautiwood is the family-owned unfinished furniture store whose wide variety of sustainable, high-quality and solid-wood furniture enables homeowners to express their personal style in pieces that last a lifetime.



- What are the foundations of your brand, in terms of:
 1. Function (“Customers get _____ from this brand”)
 2. Emotion (“Customers feel _____ about this brand”)
 3. Self-expression (“Customers are _____ when they buy this brand”)

STEP 3: EXPRESSION

In the next phase of rebranding, you'll 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, 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?

Ask yourself:

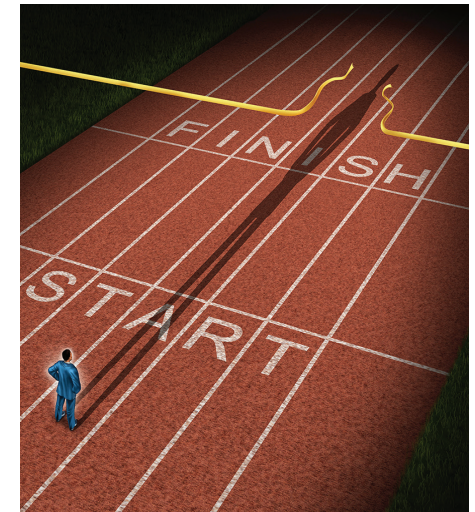
- How do I currently use my logo? On signage, marketing materials, packaging?
- Which visual elements would I like to keep, and which would I like to change?
- What tone of voice do I use in my marketing materials? Is it friendly, casual, professional, formal?
- What do I envision as my brand's personality?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

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.

EXPRESS YOUR BRAND

To convey Beautiwood's new brand, Jennifer and Kevin came up with the following messaging:

- **Service:** Highlight the value of personal service; emphasize that furniture can be customized to individual tastes
- **Education:** Explain product quality in specific terms, such as craftsmanship, expertise and solid wood; educate customers about types of wood and sustainability; foster pride in buying well-crafted furniture
- **Community:** Instill pride in customers for choosing greener furniture



STEP 4: EXECUTION

Your rebranding is almost complete. Now, how do you let everyone know about your new brand? 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.

CONCLUSION

How will you know if your rebranding effort is successful? 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. ▼

A NEW LOOK

Beautiwood's logo (top right) was outdated, with a hard-to-read font and comical illustration that didn't convey the rebrand. Jennifer and Kevin chose a simple yet elegant new logo (middle right) that emphasizes the product's unique qualities and Beautiwood's long history, while clearly conveying what it sells.



OLD LOGO



NEW LOGO

