

# Why is a brand not just a logo?

**Much of the theory around a logo change, gets confused with the understanding of a re-branding exercise. Often people confuse asking for a new brand, and expecting that to result in just a new name, or a new logo believing that their brand ends there.**

The theory is much more complicated than that – but it is the practical that needs better explanation. A new brand is more than a new email signature, website icon or a logo that can be put into the left hand corner of a letterhead, a new brand is about strategy, people, products and services, stakeholders, employees, markets and calls to action.

Lets take for example the brand of a person – someone that we can all identify / remember. Lets for arguments sake take the new Duchess of Cambridge, Princess Catherine (Kate). By definition of the company in which she works for (the royal family), she has to act, be seen and relate to her public (her market) in a certain way. There is an unspoken understanding that her stakeholders (the public, her family, the UK monarchy etc) have certain expectations of her in this role. But when she joined the family, she brought with her a breath of fresh air – a rebrand of the entire royal affair. She has livened it up with a new contemporary look, she has energised it with a new way of addressing her fans, she has given it a facelift with her very presence. That's a rebrand in progress.

In company terms, a brand is everything about the company. It's the central point that you use to give your market reasons to believe in your offering.

A consistent and relevant approach to how you execute a re-brand, and how you communicate this to your stakeholders is key to its success.

**It starts with strategy:** Who you want to be to your market? What position you want to hold in your industry? Understanding who your target audience is, from a user/ persuader and purchaser point of view. Understanding what is important to them, and how they will go through the process of buying your product. It looks and analyses trends and changes in the triggers that cause purchase behaviour, and ensures that the brand you are creating – answers all these questions in a way that is relevant to the people who matter.

**It builds with customer service.** Few brands can afford not to be centered around their customer – especially in today's market where change is inevitable and barriers to entry are low across board. A company that builds its brand around relationships and ensures that all elements of its engagement with its customer is centered around service to them – create loyalty – which creates repeat business. It also ensures that all products / services meet their needs of their target audience – building reasons to purchase, and increasing switching costs. A brand is endemic in the way you speak.

**It grows with communication and delivery.** How often we find ourselves buying into a brand in the “sale cycle” just to be let down in our own experience thereof. Communication and Delivery remain key to how the market experiences the brand post purchase, and how they engage with the brand going forward. Ensuring that your communication is demonstrative of your brand promise, and appropriate in tone, is as important as ensuring that your promises are kept when it comes to delivering on them. This is where product attributes, service processes, call centres, guarantees, post sale service etc becomes a critical path for “on brand” delivery. The quality of all elements of engagement with your market communicates your commitment to a rebranded company.

**It fails without your people.** Most importantly is the understanding that your brand, and a rebrand is about your people. Re-brands ask for a change in culture, a change in mindset and a buy-in from the team. Because they are what your market sees. Building a good team starts with the right HR practises, and training – but a rebrand asks people to believe that things can be different. And to successfully do that – you have to fulfil that ideal. That includes changes to facilities where necessary, work spaces, policies and procedures and an overhaul of “old ways” that may not build the new thinking. This is possibly the toughest part of a rebranding process, as change will always cause some anxiety and dissention. But ensuring that your people understand what is coming – ensures that they will become ambassadors in your market – doing half the work for you.

As was stated in a recent Harvard Business Review article<sup>1</sup>: A Brand is not a Logo, “Ultimately, brand is about caring about your business at every level and in every detail, from the big things like mission and vision, to your people, your customers, and every interaction anyone is ever going to have with you, no matter how small.

Whether you know it or not, whether you have a swanky logo or not, you do have a brand. The question is whether or not it's the brand you really want”

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<sup>1</sup> <http://blogs.hbr.org/pallotta/2011/06/a-logo-is-not-a-brand.html>