

Focus on Results



The Time to Act Is Now

3.01

Rebrand to Boost Business,
Lead Your Market and
Knock Out the Competition



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Brands that stand out.
Results that stand up.

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Today, as the economy barely registers a pulse in some industry sectors, your first thought might be to hunker down. Wait it out. See what develops.

But actually, what makes sense is counter-intuitive: When buyers are few, they choose the market leader to serve their needs. They stock up on the best known brand and invest in the one that is most trusted. The companies who successfully project those attributes will win the business when business is scarce. They'll also bounce back faster than the competition when the economy recovers.

So ask yourself: How well does your organization project a compelling brand image that communicates your leadership? Your brand identity is critical because it builds awareness and loyalty by engaging intelligence, imagination and emotion.

That's why rebranding is a smart move in any economic environment. Maybe you just took over the family business...or the industry you work in is changing at the speed of light. Perhaps your customer base is confused about what you deliver...or you need to project more professionalism to play with the big boys. Never has there been a better time to rebrand to grow a loyal customer base. You can bank on it.

5 Reasons to Rebrand Now

The tougher the times, the more important it is to project the professionalism and currency that market leaders embrace. While no organization intends to end up with an outdated logo or a fractured market presence, the pace of change can leave even a solid organization looking wobbly to its customers. Here's a short list of some of the ways that rebranding can deliver big dividends...

1. Net new customers by setting the industry standard. "We weren't looking for a new logomark, but it became clear that we needed one," explains Kathy Cilia, director of marketing and members services for American Medical Technologists. "We wanted our high professional exam standards to be better recognized in the industry and also wanted to project a personality that reflected energy, currency, and quality."

As a non-profit organization that certifies more than 40,000 allied health professionals in five-plus fields, AMT's rebranding goals also included creating a consistent identity

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and streamlining production for more effective communication. A new logo, color palette, templates, style guide, and image library provided a springboard for a more aggressive advertising campaign and trade show presence to become better recognized among key target audiences.

The feedback? “Nobody likes change, but even members who were really attached to the old logo love our new look,” explains Cilia. “The energy, color, and sharp clean lines definitely attract newer people coming into the profession.”

- 2. Take stakeholders into account.** Anixter Center, a 91-year old Chicago-based provider of services and support for people with disabilities, is the parent organization for three distinct divisions resulting from a series of mergers over the last decade with CALOR (serving HIV/AIDS clients in the Latino Community), Chicago Hearing Society (CHS) (serving people who are deaf or hard of hearing) and National Lekotek Center (resource for toys and play for children with special needs).

The challenge: Develop a cohesive brand identity for Anixter Center and related distinct identities for each division. (Not only does each division serve distinct populations within tight-knit communities, but funding depends on communicating these identities well.)

Through focus groups, the organization learned that staff, clients, the board and volunteers did not identify with Anixter Center’s visual identity. There was also a clear disconnect between Anixter Center’s reputation for innovation and excellence and its outdated logo. (Blue stick figures and wheelchair icons were more suggestive of a disabled sign in a public rest room than a passionate, high-impact organization renowned for empowerment.)

“It was a bottom-up process,” explains Anixter Center Vice President of Development Brian Lepacek. “We designated all stakeholders to be ‘citizen branders’ and set clear touch points for feedback throughout the rebranding process which enabled us to address questions and respond to concerns.”

By the time Anixter Center launched its new modular logo mark and tagline—“The Ability to Soar”— stakeholders at every level were on board. The new mark, the Anixter Center kite, is comprised of triangles that represent goals and opportunities. A star emerges from the center of the kite symbolizing the inherent ability in each of us to reach our full potential which is at the heart of the Anixter Center mission. Within the framework of the kite, each division maintains its independent identity (e.g. CALOR, Lekotek, CHS) while consistent typography ensure a family look.

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Anixter Center, a provider of services and support for people with disabilities, grew to become the parent organization for three distinct divisions. A new coordinated brand was essential.

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“It’s a conversation starter when people go out to the community to promote the agency,” notes Lepacek. “People love that it’s contemporary, dynamic, colorful, and that the kite is flying. It truly reflects our mission of providing an array of services and supports for people with disabilities to live, learn, work, and play in the community.”

- 3. Spark interest by aligning customer perceptions with your market niche.** “When the economy tanked, management initially decided to put our creative on hold,” says Courtney Stone, marketing manager for Dexter Magnetic Technologies. “But when we had a leadership change, new management quickly recognized that we couldn’t afford to wait, particularly because of the economy.” As a result, Dexter took an in-depth look at its customers, asking: “How should we adjust to the economy?” “Who are our best customers?” “What are we offering and to whom?” The consensus: Dexter needed to rebrand and discard its outdated “mom and pop” image in favor of a clean, high-tech look.

The company’s worn out brand identity and cutting-edge reputation were incongruent. While Dexter’s old marketing pieces were saturated with color and dark imagery, the components they were making were going into high tech products. As a result, the new logo mark uses steel gray and updated typography to show a different Dexter. A vibrant green arrow shows the forward motion and innovation for which the company is recognized. “Rebranding also signaled to employees that we were taking a new approach to business,” adds Stone.

- 4. Pay attention by target marketing more effectively.** While Dexter is known for its custom engineering applications, it also has a specialized electronic parts division that offers off-the-shelf products. On the old Dexter website, customers had to choose whether they wanted to buy a product or get help with a custom solution. The rebranding process helped the company to see they were forcing customers to choose between competing business models.

“We realized that at least 200 of our customers had also purchased electronic products,” says Stone. “As a result, we started a horizontal marketing campaign with 80% of our resources focused on our top 20 clients, regardless of what they were buying and also identifying opportunities in underserved sub-markets.” As the new website debuts in coming weeks, Dexter will measure website hits, click-throughs on e-brochures, and ad coupons redeemed to fine-tune their approach.

- 5. Leverage your image to grow the business.** Facility Wizard Software realized it had outgrown its playful small company image. In fact, its outdated image was costing it

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business with some of its best potential customers. “We actually solicited feedback about our brand with customers who hadn’t accepted our proposals,” explains Facility Wizards CEO Dave Johnson. “One person told me he didn’t feel he could take our proposal to his superiors because we didn’t look like a serious company.”

Phase I of the branding process included phone interviews with current, past, and “lost” clients, such as the one above. Staff filled out answers to questions in a workbook (e.g., “What is Facility Wizard’s business in one word?”, “If Facility Wizard was an animal, what would it be?”) and then shared them with the group. This uncovered gaps in perception and opportunities for re-positioning the brand.

To go after the six-figure projects that were the future of Facility Wizard Software, the company needed an updated image that still captured the magic embodied in the old logo, while looking bigger and more stable to resonate with the corporate clients and government agencies it wanted to reach. The result: A more descriptive name and a new mark that combines the solid structure of a representational building with the magical quality of a wizard’s hat.

Since the rebranding, Facility Wizard Software has made Inc.’s list of 5000 fastest-growing companies three years in a row. “Rebranding was certainly an important ingredient in that success,” adds Johnson.

Boost ROI on Your Rebranding Investment

Here’s three more ways to get the most out of your investment:

- **Be strategic.** What outcomes are you seeking? Is your goal to attract new customers? To outflank the competition? Branding is more than a logomark. It’s a carefully planned customer experience that you deliver through every customer touch point from your website to your sales representatives.
- **Accrue goodwill.** Start with focus groups, telephone interviews or surveys that include employees and leaders as well as current and past customers. By getting specific feedback on perception gaps and opportunities, you’ll deliver rebranding that resonates.
- **Track results.** Was it worth it? If your goal is new customers, use metrics to track new versus returning visits to your website. If the objective is greater customer loyalty, track and report number of website visits per person. You can measure prospect to sales conversions as well as brand lift (likelihood to recommend) with on-line exit surveys.

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Leverage Your Brand with Templates

So. You've got the new logomark and tagline. The typography and colors have all been specified. And you sent everyone the style guide so they'd have all the information. But what's *this*? A brand new ad staring back at you from the latest issue of the trade magazine with everything all wrong!

"It was a last minute thing," explains the new guy in Sales. "Sorry, I didn't have time," says the CEO's assistant when you ask why the cover letter she just drafted to your most important customer is missing the new logomark.

"We use templates for Microsoft Word documents, Microsoft Power Point presentations and InDesign documents to create white papers, proposals, brochures and surveys to ensure we're sending a strong, consistent message about our brand," explains Witt-Kieffer marketing manager Jeanne Farrell. "With 60 consultants in 16 offices, the goal is to make it easy for everyone to follow our corporate look."

"The templates also really help us to be more strategic," adds Farrell. "We moved from one-color to four-color presentations that focus on several key messages. Next, we'll measure the effectiveness of this shift by comparing our prospect-to-client conversion rate."

Some tips:

- 1. Provide letterhead and envelope digital templates.** A simple template in Microsoft Word has margins and fonts already set according to the brand style guide. Open it up, fill it out, load letterhead into your printer and press print!
- 2. Offer all-in-one digital templates.** These Microsoft Word digital templates include the logo mark and all elements of the printed company letterhead and are designed for e-mail-ready PDFs. When your customer opens it and prints it out on a blank piece of paper, it looks just like your letterhead.
- 3. Create printer-ready templates.** This is a time and money-saver for those frequently used flyers, newsletters, ads, and brochures that need quick customization for target markets, sales people, or special customers. Your in-house designer can easily work with Adobe InDesign templates to pop in a new photo and caption or import text into a pre-set format. It's ready to send to a commercial printer!

NeigerDesign is a results-driven marketing, communications and design firm. Since 1989, we have been meeting the needs of businesses, healthcare organizations and professional associations by providing innovative strategic solutions to complex marketing challenges. Our clients are progressive leaders who understand that strategic "design thinking" can drive the success of their organization with brands that stand out and results that stand up.

THE VALUE OF A BRAND STYLE GUIDE

To create a consistent brand experience, you'll need to carry the color, fonts, and images throughout all marketing channels...no matter who's in charge of the next brochure or Facebook page.

A style guide defines clear usage and limitation rules for how to use the brand and may include a logo, color palette, fonts and image library. It protects your brand and lays the foundation for brochures, ads, or website templates that help you respond quickly and cost-effectively to new marketing opportunities. (To take it to the next level, see "Leverage Your Brand with Templates.")

5 MORE REASONS TO REBRAND

- 1. Communicate a new mission after a merger.**
- 2. Overcome negative customer perceptions.**
- 3. Create a common culture.**
- 4. Re-position for a new market.**
- 5. Convey passion and purpose.**

