

IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT

Most marketing departments and agencies try to make changes and implement new initiatives within many of their clients' businesses. This helps them stand above the competition and grow to best suit the ever-evolving marketplace, writes **Michael Kava**.

Smart businesses are adapting to today's technologically savvy society by implementing various social media campaigns and interesting in-store promotions that involve mobile phones and social media platforms.

But what drives companies to change an integral part of their business?

Many older companies try to be clever and different from others by altering a significant part of their business that doesn't necessarily need changing.

If you do this, you run the risk of damaging the brand.

Loyal customers may not understand the change and opt out of your service so it is important that many questions are answered and examined before any action is taken. Is the change subtle and gradual? Is it ever a good idea to even try?

Changing a brand's logo is a good example of this. Logos can evoke all sorts of emotions including trust and reassurance, so if you're thinking of changing a logo, you need to consider the impact it may have.

A company that recently changed a major part of its business is Rebel Sport. This sports industry leader changed its logo to Rebel, with the second 'e' backwards and all in lower case – a fresh, modern look.

"Rebel's new-look stores and identity articulates our commitment to becoming Australia's leading and most inspiring sports store destination," Rebel Group managing director Erica Berchtold says.

Changing its iconic 27 year-old brand was a big leap for Rebel and the revitalisation was probably necessary. But was a logo change the right way to go about it?

THE RIGHT THING TO DO

Changing your logo or name is a very big deal that can determine where your business will head in the future. If there is a passion and need for change to help bring a brand back to life, change should be encouraged – but perfect execution is essential. Any alterations should be discussed with your target audience through all communication channels to help them understand why something new is occurring and how it is going to benefit them in a positive way.

WHEN CHANGE IS DONE RIGHT

Another recent example of a rebrand is McDonald's who temporarily changed its name to Maccas. The fast-food chain changed the signage in 13 selected outlets across the country in the lead up to Australia Day.

This change was a great rebrand as most Australian's say Maccas as opposed to McDonald's, which helps accentuate the Aussie feel and love of this fast food restaurant.

A couple of years ago McDonald's also created a fresh look with a new and healthier menu to help deter negativity about the health risks of eating fast food. This new initiative was successful – every aspect of packaging was revised to include nutritional information, anchoring a trusting relationship with customers.

WHEN CHANGE CAN TURN YOU INTO A BILLION DOLLAR INDUSTRY

Nearly 20 years ago, Apple was close to bankruptcy, but since that time it became a billion dollar company by rebranding and producing elegant and reliable products such as MacBooks, iPods, iPhones and more. Apple created

a community for Apple users that also helped the change. All their products are linked and that means consumers return to their brand time and time again. From having an iPhone to link to your MacBook and iTunes to buy music for your iPhone and iPods, the connection is endless.

WHEN IT SUITS SMALL BUSINESSES

Change in branding for any small business is usually easier than rebranding a bigger company as many small businesses are not as well-known.

Most small businesses should warrant change. A logo, positioning statement and overall creative facelift can help enhance a company's reputation and help stand out in an over-communicated world.

A new logo redesign or adding a positioning to a business name can help boost your message out into the marketplace. Rebranding an existing business is usually a crucial step for them to be taken seriously as they expand into a more aggressive and technologically-savvy marketplace.

Even businesses in trade industries have had to evolve and rebrand to help keep up with this new need for a greener focus in their industry.

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This saying may be true in other aspects of life and may even be relevant in parts of the marketing sector, but change to an existing business of any size is crucial to the survival of a brand.

This isn't to say that executing a rebrand should be taken lightly. If it isn't approached correctly, it can do more harm than good.

So always do your research and communicate effectively.

Remember, don't make changes to an existing businesses just for the sake of it. Only make adjustments when they are needed to help revitalise a brand or to keep up with surrounding changes. ■

Michael Kava is the Director of Little Marketing, a company providing leading marketing advice for small businesses.