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BRAND ON THE RUN: THE EFFECTS OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL
COMMUNICATIONS ON CORPORATE REBRANDING EFFORTS

by
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A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford May 2023

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To my Granddaddy, who always believed I was smart enough to do anything. This may not be enough to get me into Mensa, but it proves you were right.

I love you and I miss you.

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I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Matthew Shaner, for his constant support and guidance. He agreed to help an unknown student, suffering from senior-itus, complete this research and (hopefully) graduate with Honors.

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ABSTRACT

ABIGAIL KATHERINE VANDIVER: The effects of internal and external communications on corporate rebranding efforts.
(Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Shaner)

A company's most valuable asset is its brand. Not just limited to its name and logo, a brand is loosely defined as the identity of an organization. A strong brand identity can create strong customer loyalty. Changing even a part of this identity can cause confusion and ultimately revenue loss. This study examined how business owners and marketers communicate with their stakeholders when they decide a rebrand is necessary. After researching current literature on this topic, businesses in Oxford, Mississippi which have undergone a rebrand in the last decade were recruited to answer questions. Ten organizations participated either through interview or questionnaire. Each organization was placed into one of four categories regarding stakeholder engagement: high external, low external, high internal, or low internal. Findings of the research differed from past literature in that most organizations chose not to engage external stakeholders yet have not experienced any hardship due to any brand changes.

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INTRODUCTION

A brand is defined as, “a set of tangible or intangible attributes, symbolized by a trademark (name, logo, etc.) which operates properly, creates value and influence (Todor, 2014). Brand value is created both monetarily and stakeholder generated brand equity. Brand Equity being the intangible value of a firm. This can be reflected in the price of a firm on the stock exchange, but also in the loyalty of consumers. In many cases, brand equity is priceless, and once it is lost, it cannot easily be regained. The brand aims to link mission, purpose, and identity in a symbol representation (Lee, 2017).

The process of rebranding involves a change in something sometimes tangible or intangible within a firm to create value for the firm. There is much discussion about which changes in a company’s brand earn the title of a “rebrand.” Some articles suggest that a physical change in name, color, logo, or slogan is necessary. While other authors argue that rebranding is merely a shift in culture or process (Luck 2012). This research will adopt the definition from Muzellec and Lambkin (2006), “rebranding corresponds to the creation of a new brand element aiming to create a new image or position in the mind of stakeholders.” Strategies for rebranding can be categorized as either evolutionary or revolutionary according to Hanh Le (2014). Depending on stakeholder views of the initial brand and the necessary outcome of the project itself, firms can choose to create radical immediate change or instigate a slow, methodical culture shift. Either strategy

There are many studies that evaluate reasons for creating a new identity through rebranding, most involve generating brand equity for a business. Other cited reasons include creating an outward reflection of an internal change or giving a new identity to a merged business. Sometimes a brand has become obsolete, and a rebrand is necessary to modernize a company. Other times rebranding is necessary to reflect external change (Branca 2011). This can come in the form of increased competitor strength or a decrease in perceived market value. A study by Muzellec and Lambkin cites mergers and acquisitions as the most dominant cause for rebranding. While a desire to change the brand image in the minds of consumers is number three in this list of reasons.

Stakeholder communication proves to be one of the most difficult, yet important factors in executing a successful rebrand. This literature review serves as a summary of all major essays concerning rebranding. For this research, all the articles are be discussed from a framework of internal and external stakeholder communication. Table 1 outlines the importance of stakeholder engagement as a part of the rebranding processes discussed within each article.

Table 1. Rebranding Literature Summaries

Author	Type	Internal Efforts	External Efforts	Article Summary
Barbu (2016)	Corporate Rebranding		X	The results of this study highlight the elements that support the brand identity and image alignment: marketing communication, product characteristics and internal brand strength. On the other hand, the efforts to align the brand identity and brand image are negatively affected by the attitudes of the consumers and their experience with the brand.
Branca & Borges (2011)	Corporate Rebranding		X	Rebranding corresponds to the creation of a new name, term, symbol, design, or a combination of them for an established brand with the intention of developing a differentiated position in the mind of stakeholders and competitors. - Findings: rebranding does not equal higher market value instead it is typically unfavorably viewed by investors
Chad (2016)	Corporate Rebranding/ nonprofit	X		Problems related to initial management attempts to utilize minimal external expertise and to low levels of employee involvement and buy in. Findings suggest that all six principles of corporate rebranding proposed by Merrilees and Miller (2008) should be used by management as a guide to increase efficiency of the rebranding process and extend these principles to a nonprofit context.
Collange (2015)	Service Rebranding		X	This suggests 5 hypotheses as to how consumers will react to brand change. Also, strong attachment to the original brand suggests less attachment and more displeasure with the new brand; on the contrary the more the service relates to the new brand, the higher the satisfaction with the brand will be.
Collange & Bolanche (2015)	Product Rebranding		X	The article expresses that most consumers do not understand or want product brand change, especially when it comes in the form of name change.
Daly & Moloney (2005)	Corporate Rebranding	X	X	Rebranding is continuous and can happen in complete overhauls and small things; a brand is arguably the most important equity to internal and external stakeholders; brand is tangible and intangible

Goi & Goi (2011)	Corporate Rebranding		X	This study gives a model of why and how companies rebrand, and it suggests three generic stages to the overall rebranding process.
Gotsi & Andriopoulos (2007)	Corporate Rebranding	X		Internal efforts are necessary to engage stakeholders instead of letting them be on the receiving end of the message. This research suggests detrimental effects on company culture and the brand.
Hanh Le & Cheng (2014)	Corporate Rebranding		X	Authors discuss that while revolutionary rebranding strategies are preferred but consumer relationship to the original is critical in determining the extent of the change.
Joseph & Gupta (2020)	Corporate Rebranding	X		Authors theorize that employee engagement is critical to corporate rebranding management; a campaign is not successful without engaging internal stakeholders - this article suggests specific methods to engaging those internal publics to maintain brand equity.
Kaikati (2003)	Corporate Rebranding	X	X	"Managing change" This is a profile on a consulting company that has taken the approach of separating accounting and marketing - instead of taking books approach they take an image and equity approach to changing a company.
Kaikati & Kaikati (2003)	Corporate Rebranding		X	Once again, a powerful brand equals equity; discusses 4 types of rebranding traps; defines rebranding as a complete overhaul not just confined to the marketing department, but as a catalyst for corporate change.
Lee and Bourne (2017)	Nonprofit Rebranding	X	X	This article examines the necessity of nonprofits to continually engage stakeholders through a rebranding process.
Lomax & Mador (2002)	Corporate Rebranding	X		This research theorizes the ideal rebranding process & keys for successful rebranding; nothing new or different than any of the other articles.
Luck (2012)	Corporate Rebranding	X	X	The author shares on-the-ground experiences to help deconstruct and analyze how companies can hit, or miss, that rebrand balance. This pragmatic and informative article will help any company, in any industry, find a starting point for any type of rebranding process.
Merrilees & Miller (2007)	Corporate Rebranding	X	X	This research establishes rebranding as more than an instantaneous change in messaging, but a process for establishing internal and external "buy-in." Even new branding techniques should keep at the core of the business.

Moiescu (2006)	Corporate Rebranding	X	X	Moiescu postulates six strategies for rebranding, all sparked by the need for brands to evolve to maintain relevancy and position against other brands.
Mróz-Gorgoń (2016)	Product and Corporate Rebranding		X	The article outlines effective rebranding activities: those positively influencing brand image must distinguish a brand from competition, increase brand awareness and conform to company mission and strategy.
Muzellec & Lambkin (2003)	Corporate Rebranding	X	X	The decision to rebrand is provoked by structural change. Also, a change in marketing aesthetics has less change on profit than does employee attitudes; defines rebranding by giving it a new position in the minds of the stakeholders.
Muzellec & Lambkin (2004)	Corporate Rebranding		X	Rebranding can take place on three levels: corporate, business unit, and product levels; rebranding is signaling to stakeholders that some kind of change has occurred (external, internal, ownership structure, competitive structure, or corporate strategy).
Muzellec & Lambkin (2008)	Corporate Product Rebranding	X	X	A name is directly linked to brand equity; how can changing a name affect other aspects of the company - this article talks about brand architecture in reference to parent brands and product brands.
Muzellec & Lambkin (2008)	Merger and Acquisition Rebranding		X	Rebranding in mergers and acquisitions creates four different possibilities when choosing a new name; the choice of these four options depends on the current state of both merging companies, the environments which they are in, and the overall goal of the mergers and acquisitions.
Nana & Tobias-Mamina (2019)	Corporate Rebranding		X	Article suggests that rebranding is necessary for success rather than a tool to save a sinking business; goal of rebranding is to replicate a change in the business and to foster a new image (rebranding as innovation).

Olteanu (2020)	Product Rebranding		X	The analysis considers the way in which Burberry masterfully capitalized on consumers' emotional attachments to social and cultural events and technological changes since the company's establishment in 1856 to the present day.
Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach (2018)	Corporate Rebranding	X	X	This is a case study for a failed logo change within the Gap, they listened to the stakeholders and adjusted even though the corporate plan was to adjust the physical image of the company.
Todor (2014)	Corporate Rebranding		X	Strategic marketing will create differentiation which is more easily achieved than total comparative advantage. Strategic marketing principles closely mirror what it means to rebrand; it is essential to win differentiation amongst competition.
Tsai & Dev (2015)	Corporate Rebranding	X	X	For the hospitality industry, rebranding results in a more favorable image and can almost instantly increase occupancy rates.
Williams & Son (2021)	Corporate and Product Rebranding		X	The aim of this study is to investigate how sport rebranding in the form of logo redesign influences fan loyalty. Through an experimental approach, the results indicate that attitude toward rebranding plays a significant role in fan response when sport rebranding occurs.

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

External Efforts

The most emphasis on engaging stakeholders mentioned in the literature is focused on external buy-in. In twenty-three of the twenty-eight articles evaluated for this study external stakeholder engagement was mentioned as a key aspect of the rebranding process. In the case of corporate rebranding, the process is necessary in creating brand equity, as in adding value to the company itself. According to Branca, “[rebranding] by sending a positive message to stakeholders . . . may be judged by identifying its impact on firm value, i.e., the firm’s stock price” (Branca 2011). This study finds, however, that rebranding strategies’ effect on brand equity are not always reflected in the stock price of a corporation. In fact, investors view the instability of a brand in this process as “unfavorable” (Branca 2011).

In another study on corporate rebranding, Barbu identifies the difference between brand image and brand identity. Brand image is the external perception of a brand in the minds of customers and investors (Barbu 2016). Brand identity are the strong associations that capture the essence of the brand (Barbu 2016). Essentially these are the core internal values that differentiate one brand from another. All rebranding efforts should act to align the internal brand identity with the external brand image. Barbu synthesizes that when marketing communications are coordinated with rebranding activities, the congruence between the internal and external image is positively affected (Barbu 2016). Past consumer experiences and attitudes have a negative effect on the

congruence of image and identity (Barbu 2016). Employee opinions are briefly mentioned, but no effort is made to identify communication efforts to engage internal support.

In a study about product rebranding, Collange (2015) aims to discuss ways to overcome stakeholder resistance to the process itself. Collange cites that most consumers view name changes as either negative or neutral, and that rebranding without clear direction leaves consumers surprised and confused. In their study, they concluded that surprise impacts consumer attitudes towards rebranding. It creates the same impact as incomprehension or strong negative emotions. They also concluded that consumers with high trust in their firms do not experience the same cognitive process as consumers with low trust. Those low trust consumers experience a high weight of negative emotions.

Collange and Bolanche conducted a study in 2014 centered around service rebranding that yielded similar results to the previous study. The hypothesis was centered around consumer attachment to brands. The researchers believed that the stronger attachment to an original brand, the more displeasure would be experienced with a brand change by consumers (Collange, 2014). This study finds the hypothesis to be true with one counterpoint. The perceived convenience of service by location is not significantly associated with the brand. Therefore, when rebranding services with strong competitors, location does not hold as much weight as other factors. Furthermore, managers must take all of this into account when planning a rebranding strategy. Collange puts forth three conditions that lead to better acceptance of a service rebrand campaign. “(1) the new brand must be justified for the service; (2) the new brand must be, actually or potentially, more attractive than the initial brand; and (3) customers must feel attached to the service

place” (Collange, 2014). Service managers can use this framework when deciding whether to rebrand their business.

In *Corporate rebranding and brand preference*, Hanh Le discusses whether to use revolutionary or evolutionary rebranding methods. It is widely accepted that varying consumer attitudes to a brand produce varying consumer attitudes to a rebrand. Therefore, different strategies are necessary when aiming for different results with varying degrees of stakeholder support. The study finds that when product name is favorable, evolutionary rebranding strategies should be used. In other words, a company should choose repositioning methods over a name change. Consumers are most likely to adapt to a gradual change, then to an immediate identity change. If the brand name holds a negative connotation in the minds of consumers, revolutionary rebranding is necessary to create a new reputation for the product and brand. The study also finds that consumer expertise of a product should be considered in determining the rebranding strategy. In cases where expertise is high, corporations should “communicate comprehensive information regarding brand repositioning to target expert consumers rather than spending time considering whether to rename their brand” (Hanh Le, 2014). Persuading expert consumers is important to the rebranding process.

In Kiakati’s 2003 research, evaluates corporate rebranding campaigns that focus on complete corporate change. Kiakati suggests four traps companies often fall into when attempting a successful rebrand. First, companies fall into the heritage rebranding trap when they fail to consider their brand’s name or image in the minds of stakeholders. Companies may also be tempted to “follow the rebranding crowd blindly” (Kiakati, 2003). Rebranding can be highly successful for some companies, but others may

experience stakeholder distrust instead of created equity. In the cases of mergers and acquisitions, firms may be tempted to just combine the old names into one mega name. In some cases, this strategy may be effective, but other times it just creates market confusion. Lastly, companies should be wary of using celebrity endorsements of their rebranding. As soon as that celebrity makes a poor decision in the media, that company is forever linked with that bad decision. This research then offers six strategic options for creating a successful rebrand within a company. In every decision that is made, top executives must be sure that changes are being received by the consumers with the intended message.

In *Corporate Rebranding: An Exploratory Review*, Muzellec and Lambkin research and evaluate companies that employ new brand names in their strategy for rebranding. Corporate rebranding is primarily a “signaling device - a means of communicating to stakeholders that something about the organization has changed” (Lambkin, 2003). In their research, they primarily focus on drivers of rebranding. They found that mergers and acquisitions were the most prevalent cause of a change in brand identity. Managers want to reflect this new business structure, so they make visible changes to the company's symbols to signal that something has changed. Other common drivers cited were company spin-offs and brand image concerns. Typically, rebranding is driven by accounting and upper management as a device to create equity. However, the process is actually a function of marketing where stakeholder communication is crucial. Market research is crucial to understanding the business within the minds of consumers, and communication with consumers will provide the most successful rebranding campaigns.

In Mroz-Gorgon's essay *Branding and Rebranding - Grocery Market Perspective*, the rebranding within a grocery market in Poland as the center of research. When choosing where to shop for groceries, research found that consumers typically choose based on price of groceries first, then on brands carried at the store. Therefore, consumers are aware of branding, even when they shop for low involvement purchases of normal goods. In focus groups, researchers discovered that respondents value modern advertising, and when the advertising is distinguishable, consumers are more likely to buy. They concluded that “rebranding has a positive influence on customer loyalty in the long term” (Mrox-Gorgon, 2016). Customer relationships are so important when engaging in a rebranding campaign, but they are even more important when the product is a normal goods. Rebrands can be used to modernize a product, and to create a more desirable brand image among competitors.

A study on rebranding in the banking industry finds that when mergers and acquisitions are involved, firms of varying sizes may choose to create one brand, a joint brand, a flexible brand, or a new brand (Muzellec, 2008). This essay does little to discuss methods for engaging stakeholders, but rather gives explanation for why some firms choose to create new brands while other firms rely on old names to continue a positive image in the minds of their stakeholders. The writers did find that the relative strength of the brand in the minds of consumers can determine whether or not the acquiring firm will attempt to change the name of the existing bank. It is also accepted that the stronger national presence of a brand, the less likely it is to impose its name on any international brands it may acquire. Also, if the acquired brand has a strong national identity, the less likely it is to be changed. Strong brand identity in the minds of consumers must be

nurtured through the rebranding process, as many efforts can diminish or harm the brand's long-term equity. Therefore, when acquiring a brand, it is important to consider what identity change can do to its current customers.

In *The impact of corporate rebranding on brand equity and firm performance*, the writer's research rebranding within retail stores and franchising. In their model, rebranding can be as simple as changing the store layout. This creates a new store image, and "provides value-added benefits to the consumer" (Nana, 2019). Store layout is important because it helps to generate real revenue as well as brand equity with customers. Once again, this study supports that rebranding does not directly create or affect brand equity. However, it does support that brand equity and customer experience have a direct impact on firm performance. Therefore, changing the store layout would help to create brand equity, and ultimately positively impact the firm performance. Changing store layout engages customers in the change, without fundamentally shaking the foundations of the business. Customers may notice a change, and while they may choose to react negatively, emotion does not play as critical of a role in this type of rebranding.

In an article on product rebranding, Olteanu discusses the case of Burberry. With a brand with this much status and legacy, it is difficult to stay relevant for decades. At the inception of the brand, the owners had complete control of perception and product lines. Unfortunately, in both the manufacturing and information eras, the product line essentially equals brand image. So there is no space for consumer engagement. Following the creation and popularity of social media, Burberry was forced to engage with consumers, and in the early 2000s was regarded a "heavy user of analytics to understand

shifts in consumer preferences and behavior” (Olteanu, 2020). Consumer engagement through repositioning at Burberry, is not a direct communication through surveys and focus groups. Instead, they listen to their customers online, and make changes to reflect how their customers currently feel and how they want them to feel. Ultimately, while the Burberry brand is cutting-edge, their rebranding efforts with their own consumers in mind, have kept them relevant for a century.

Todor (2014) discusses how differentiation is more easily achieved than comparative advantage in *The importance of branding and rebranding for strategic marketing*. Long, expensive rebranding campaigns can often temporarily fix external problems, while leaving internal challenges to remain the same. Strategic marketing can be used in cases where there is no real internal change. The main purpose of communicating a rebrand to stakeholders is to announce that an internal change has been made. Perhaps some problem has been solved, or a new manager has been hired. When rebranding is simply used to reposition, when no real change has been made, consumers will not change their opinions on the company. That is where strategic marketing serves a purpose. Communicate with stakeholders through creative uses of the media, instead of engaging in lengthy rebrands that mean no real change for the firm.

In his article about sport rebranding, Williams discusses fan attitudes towards a team or league after it engages in a rebrand. Specifically, this study focuses on logo redesign. The findings support that “a modification of logo design may harm consumers’ attitudes toward the brand” (Williams, 2021). Depending on the current level of consumer engagement, brands should choose evolutionary or revolutionary strategies to create effective change. Furthermore, sports’ marketers should assess current brand

loyalty by their fans in order to understand attitudes toward their rebranding efforts. Brands with highly engaged fans should engage them throughout the process, or at a minimum, ask for feedback regarding the changes.

Internal Efforts

In an employee focused article on non-profit rebranding, Chad (2016) concludes that there is no difference in engaging the stakeholders of a nonprofit rebrand than in a corporate rebrand. Chad adopts a three-phased approach to rebranding: brand revisioning, attaining internal support, and implementation (Chad 2016). Employees are a reflection of the “brand personality.” Therefore in order to complete a successful rebrand, they need to be “moved from their existing mind-set/culture to another based upon realignment to the new corporate brand values (Gotsi, 2008).

In Joseph and Gupta’s article, *Corporate rebranding: an internal perspective*, rebranding is discussed through the engagement of internal stakeholders. Employees are critical to the campaign’s success, as they create a mood for the entire company. Most companies use internal communication to convey information about brand identity and changes in company fundamentals. However, “simply communicating the changes to the corporate brand doesn’t necessarily mean employees will respond with brand supportive behavior” (Joseph, 2020). So management needs to create buy-in on an intellectual and emotional level. Employees must understand the vision, and they must believe it. It is especially helpful when corporate brand identity aligns with the individual employee’s personal values. More engaged employees are less likely to become dissatisfied with brand changes, and therefore, are more likely to remain at the company.

In *Corporate Rebranding: Learning from Experience*, Lomax outlines a proposed strategy for achieving effective rebranding with a company. Firms must start with understanding the driver behind their need for an identity change. Typically, these are external pressures on an organization, such as a negative reputation or pressure for a leadership change. Then, managers must conduct research on the original brand. They need to understand how internal and external stakeholders view their name and mission in order to accurately and effectively create change within the brand's identity. A firm then needs to have clear objectives for its rebrand. "The most common objective [is] to develop a new image" (Lomax, 2002). Other brands may choose to target a new customer group, reposition to establish different quality standards, or just change a company name with a negative historical connotation. Then, managers must evaluate their stakeholder involvement. All the examples in the research cite that managers chose to engage internally rather than externally. As they believed the customers did not care about the brand name itself, but rather the quality of the product. Internally, however, companies of varying size should encourage their employees as primary communication channels for this brand identity change.

Dual Efforts

While most research focuses either on internal or external stakeholder communication efforts, some authors do discuss the importance of engaging both groups. In *Managing Corporate Rebranding*, Daly identifies a brand as the most important thing to internal and external stakeholders. The rebranding process is continuous, and it can happen in large overhauls or small tangible changes. The author provides a framework

for how a corporation may achieve a successful rebrand through renaming a company. In the planning stage of a rebrand, it is important to engage the employees. In the case of Vodafone cited in the article, employees were the first group of stakeholders to learn of the rebrand. However, to create a valuable asset of this new brand, a marketing mix must be developed to engage key external stakeholders. “Many authors suggest that particularly in people processing services, employees play a pivotal role in customer satisfaction and in the achievement of corporate objectives” (Daly, 2004). The marketing mix is most successful when the internal support is strong.

Kaikati’s research, published in *Lessons from Accenture’s 3Rs: rebranding, restructuring, and repositioning*, examines one company’s success in transforming businesses through its three-pillared approach: rebrand, restructure, and reposition. Accenture believes in rebranding to create consumer equity, rather than account equity. They are interested in changing their image for their long-term reputation rather than immediately generating more revenue. In the rebranding phase, “every effort was made to tap into the creativity of the people who know the firm best – its 70,000 professionals in 47 countries” (Kaikati, 2003). This creates instantaneous buy-in with employees, as they are now engaged in the process. Next, Accenture advocates for a push and pull advertising strategy with external stakeholders. A “push” strategy involved sending information packets right to the desks of clients, and a “pull” strategy involved massive global advertising.

Lee and Bourne examine nonprofit rebranding in *Managing Dual Identities in Nonprofit Rebranding: An Exploratory Study*. This study finds that staff can be especially emotional about identity changes in the nonprofit sector. Lee offers three management

practices for where those in charge of the rebrand can engage with stakeholders: justifying, re-visioning, and influencing. In the justifying practice, management can identify practical and urgent reasons for the rebrand to create employee buy-in. When employing the re-visioning method, managers find ways to connect both internal and external stakeholders to the core mission of the change. This works best, when a company uses brand champions outside of the communications team to advocate for the necessity of the change. The last of these best management practices is influencing. Especially within an organization, there are different views and understandings of the need for a rebrand. Some employees may immediately engage with the process while others may hate it. It is important that managers view that employees “are not merely passive receivers of identity claims; rather, they actively construct and experience meanings of these identity claims through their brands” (Lee 2017). Managers must use any tactic necessary to influence employee attitudes on change. Ultimately, Lee suggests that engagement with both internal and external stakeholders during the process is vital to the success of the organizational change. Furthermore, any tension should be met honestly, as this will aid the long-term survival of the organization.

Like other frameworks for a successful rebranding campaign, Luck (2012) advocates for a research-based approach. In order to create meaningful change in a company's position, the effort should be: “strategic, authentic to the company’s culture and values, resonant with the target’s values and needs, pointed, providing meaningful differentiation, and flexible to retain existing brand equity” (Luck, 2012). After extensive research on current consumers' views of the brand, companies should have a creative brief for the entire communications department to deliver work congruent with the new

identity. Public relations should then be used to gauge customer reaction and engage all the external stakeholders in the rebranding process. However, in public relations, companies must understand who their target audience is and how to effectively communicate with them. Without this information, all communication efforts prove futile.

In Merrilees and Miller (2007) article, *Principles of Corporate Rebranding*, the authors put forward an extension of the previously accepted best practice for rebranding. They believe that brand progress must continue to engage some part of the previous brand, and that some fundamental concepts must remain the same to have sometime in which to build upon. They put forward six principles by which brands may successfully conduct an identity change from beginning to end. The first three principles involve revision and research into the current brand. Managers must understand what they have, to understand what they need. Furthermore, managers should use this previous brand position to build a refresh on. Companies may need to support new market segments, but there is no reason for a firm to abandon its current customers. Principle four emphasizes the necessity and importance of internal stakeholder buy-in. Employees need to achieve brand orientation, where “the brand is core to the essence of the company and its strategies, that is, when all stakeholders (especially employees) have ownership of the brand and live the brand in their daily script” (Merrilees, 2007). Achieving this among internal stakeholders can create brand champions within a company, who will advocate for this new identity to external stakeholders. Principles five and six deal specifically with brand strategy implementation. Companies with high levels of coordination in their marketing mix are most likely to receive favorable responses to their rebranding. Also,

promotional efforts are vital in communicating this new company identity to stakeholders. Merrilees believes that mass media should not be used as a primary method of communication in this case, but that communication perceived to be personal or targeted is better to communicate the change one on one with consumers.

In Corporate rebranding: destroying, transferring, or creating brand equity?

Muzellec and Lambkin hypothesize that rebranding can serve several purposes within an organization. First, rebranding can seek to erase negative brand equity. The case cited in the research is a failed example of how a company can use radical repositioning to create an almost entirely new company in the minds of stakeholders. Rebranding can also be used to transfer brand equity in the case of an acquisition or a merger. In this case, the role of employee buy-in is crucial. Stakeholder image can be shaped by formal and informal signals, so when employees are dissatisfied with the efforts, a customer knows. Muzellec and Lambkin create a figure to model how the rebranding process works, and the last step in the model is internalization and externalization. Once a firm decides on their rebranding goals, communication of these goals is crucial to the success and acceptance of their efforts.

In another study by Muzellec and Lambkin, product rebranding is evaluated through the case of Guinness in Ireland. Here, the writers present two strategies for product rebranding: integration or separation. In 1997, Guinness merged with Grand Metropolitan to become Diageo plc. This meant that the Guinness name on the corporate level had changed, as it now was integrated in a brand with many other products. On the horizontal level, brand equity was lost when Guinness changed its name to Diageo. In Ireland, consumers held the brand high, and they felt a sense of cultural pride when

consuming the brand. Therefore, it was imperative that Diageo engage with internal and external stakeholders to ensure a successful adoption of the new name. When emotion is involved, consumers especially are more likely to experience.

In Tsai's article, *What's in a Brand Name? Assessing the impact of rebranding in the hospitality industry*, he hypothesizes that both internal and external stakeholder engagement are necessary for a successful rebrand even across another industry. Since rebranding "disrupts the link between consumers and the origin brand," this article attempts to formulate the best possible methods for rebranding (Tsai, 2015). This study finds that rebranding in the hospitality industry can increase occupancy instead of damaging revenue as in other industries. This change can be attributed 60% to the change of brand and 40% by the property-brand interaction. That is, the amount of engagement a particular property or franchise has with the brand pre- and post- rebrand. Therefore, it is essential for companies to engage both the external and internal stakeholders in the brand process since both account for increased revenue after a rebrand.

The literature poses many theories of effective rebranding. Most of them accept that once a need for rebranding is established, research into the current brand and market is necessary to create stakeholder buy-in. A firm needs to understand its place in the minds of its consumers, and what its current brand imaging and messaging does for its equity overall. The next step in the process is naturally the creative process, where management decides to what extent they will change the brand. This is the first-time stakeholder support can really be considered, as some cases cite employees of some companies suggesting names or slogans for the rebrand. Firms who engage their stakeholders earlier have higher success rates in internal reception of their efforts.

Ultimately, internal buy-in creates brand champions among employees, who will then advocate for the change among consumers. It is undoubtedly agreed that upon deciding on the extent of a change, it must be communicated to external stakeholders. Consumers may experience a variety of emotions when a company decides to rebrand, including surprise, anger, shock, and sadness for the original brand. Effective, personal communication can help to avoid some of the dissonance consumers may feel when experiencing a change. While the literature discusses the importance of achieving all stakeholder support and satisfaction, it fails to synthesize the most successful methods for doing so. This study aims to create a model for best practices in achieving stakeholder approval and successful rebranding through research among businesses.

Table 2. Research Framework

Stakeholder Engagement in Rebranding			
External Communications	Internal Communications		
	High	High	Low
		Low	Hero (Full Engagement)
		Lover (Culture-Driven)	Joker (No Engagement)

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

After reviewing the current literature on rebranding, I chose to gather qualitative data through interviews and questionnaires of local business owners. This would allow for the most effective and completed analysis of the data, instead of allowing for each business to evaluate themselves quantitatively. I compiled a list of forty businesses in Oxford, Mississippi that have undergone a brand change in the last ten years. I then created a list of questions aimed to gauge the level of internal and external communication by each business that was to be interviewed. The in-person interview questions in *Appendix A-1*, were used to evaluate the extent of stakeholder communication taken by each participant. Before recruiting any businesses to participate, I submitted my research application for approval to the Institutional Review Board. This application consisted of Advisor approval, my list of questions, an audio release form, a consent form, a drafted recruitment email, and the application itself. A week later, my application was approved.

The recruitment of businesses to participate was a mixture of phone calls, emails, and text messages. I started by asking businesses that I had previously connected with, and I asked for any connections they could provide me with. All participants were asked to meet for an initial in-person interview, and any non-responsive participants were sent a follow up email with an attached questionnaire. The interviews or questionnaires were conducted and completed in March of 2023. Research was focused to businesses in Oxford, Mississippi specifically, but was not limited to any specific type. All participants in this study are depicted in Table 3. All participants witnessed and assisted directly with their organization's rebrand, but each possessed a different level of professional expertise on marketing and branding overall.

Analysis Procedure

To analyze the qualitative data collected from both in-person interviews and questionnaires, I compiled all transcribed data and responses into one document. I highlighted one color for internal communication tactics and another color for external communication. This created a quantifiable picture of how each participant communicated to their stakeholders. This allowed me to draw several conclusions about rebranding outlined in the Table 3. Each participant was then ranked on either high or low external and internal engagement. This categorized them into one of the four categories in Table 2: Hero, Lover, Believer, or a Joker. A Hero is an organization that experienced high external and high internal communication through their rebrand. A Lover engaged in high internal communication and low external communication. A Believer communicated intensely with external stakeholders, but minimally with its internal stakeholders. Finally, a Joker exhibited minimal, if any, communication with any stakeholder.

Table 3. Participant Overview

Participant List	Role	Response Type	Organization Type	Scope of Rebrand	External		Internal		Name
					High	Low	High	Low	
Participant 1	Owner & Veterinarian	Interview	Veterinary Clinic	Partial name change due to intellectual property of a competitor	X			X	Believer
Participant 2	Executive Director	Interview	Tourism Office	Organization created an entirely new logo and name due to the creation of a new division		X	X		Lover
Participant 3	Minister	Interview	Church	New logo to create a unified brand		X		X	Joker
Participant 4	Executive Director	In-Person Interview	Advocate Nonprofit	Partial name change due to organization expansion. Plus, it experienced a nationwide slogan change		X	X		Lover
Participant 5	Instructor	In-Person Interview	University Academic Department	Partial name change due to a misalignment of the current name with the ultimate mission and vision of the organization		X	X		Lover
Participant 6	Associate Director	Questionnaire	University Marketing	All aspects of marketing except the logo changed to correct the communication of the brand's desired voice		X	X		Lover
Participant 7	Manager	Questionnaire	Apparel Shop	New name because of an acquisition	X		X		Hero
Participant 8	Partner	Questionnaire	Law Firm	Name and logo change as the result of a merger with another organization in a different geographic area.		X	X		Lover
Participant 9	Writer	Questionnaire	Magazine	Name and logo change due to relation of current name to an organization with a conflicting vision and mission		X		X	Joker
Participant 10	Executive Director	Questionnaire	Education Foundation	New logo and mission statement to more closely connect their brand to their values		X	X		Lover

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH FINDINGS

External Communication

Research into the communication efforts of rebranding businesses in Oxford, Mississippi proved insight into the actual practices taken by business owners. Of the ten participants, only two expressed high external communication as a part of their rebranding strategy. Characterized as a Believer, Participant 1 communicated through social media about a location change and their new name. They also chose to purchase local sponsorships to reach their target audience more directly. Additionally, they engaged previous clients about the changes, and established brand loyalty allowed their message to spread. Due to the legal dispute over their name, no explanation of the rebrand was put into an advertisement. However, when asked by customers, they are very honest and open about the situation. Participant 1 expressed satisfaction with their strategy of communication and commented,

“people are rooting for you . . . and [they] put it out there and shared”

(Participant 1).

Participant 7, a Hero, provided their clients with an explanation of the merger itself. Both the parent brand and the acquired brand made social media communicating the change. Additionally, they sent emails to all customers on their mailing list or who had made purchases communicating that a change was being made. The entire sales staff was also tasked to notify large clients of this change in name to ensure ease of transition and continued high quality of service. This merger involved changing or closing various production and distribution locations which impacts larger clients who are used to a timely manner of service.

The other eight participants communicated that external communication was either unimportant or nonexistent. Participant 2, a Lover, rebranded after a divisional restructure that would allow them to better communicate and execute their organizational mission. While they did communicate through a press release about their brand change, external input and formal engagement were not part of their strategy. Instead, the press release was aimed at explaining the organizational restructure that took place within the city's Tourism Board. Participant 3, a Joker, did not formally engage external stakeholders in the process, nor did they explicitly communicate that any kind of change was happening.

“We just started using it, there was no announcement or anything, it just started showing up” (Participant 3).

The purpose behind their rebrand was to create one unifying logo for all departments in their organization to use. It made sense that they would just start using the logo.

Participant 4, a Lover, experienced a minor name change, because of expanded organizational reach. The decision to extend business outside the county was made internally, and they believed there was no need to formally communicate this change.

Instead, they updated their logo, and they are continuing to update across every platform.

Participant 5, also in the Lover category, rebranded to align its name more closely with its vision and values. They believed that part of their name promoted values that were in direct conflict with their own. Due to the sensitive and potentially divisive circumstances that prompted the change, they never formally engaged with or announced to external stakeholders. Participant 6, a Lover, did not express any formal announcement or engagement with those outside of their organization. While the organization's logo did

not change, elements such as typefaces, slogans, and voice did. These changes were initiated to communicate more accurately who the organization already was, so there was no need to truly discuss these changes externally. Participant 8, a Lover, rebranded as the result of a merger. The name was changed to match the current and potential future growth into a regional organization. External stakeholders were only notified of these changes after they had been made via social media and a press release. There was no direct communication with current clients to ensure continued quality or loyalty. Like other participants, Participant 9, a Joker, changed its name to convey their mission and distance more accurately themselves from the connotation of their current name. Instead of drawing attention to the change, they just began operating with a new name and logo online. Participant 10, a Lover, took their rebranding further than simply a new logo by writing a new mission statement and adding a non-discriminate statement to their values. These efforts were internally driven, and there was no formal communication of change. The mission statement was rewritten to reflect what the organization was already doing, so there was little need to announce any changes externally.

Internal Communication

Internally, seven of the ten participants described high levels of stakeholder involvement. Participant 2 engaged internal stakeholders throughout the rebranding process by asking each unit what needs to be communicated by a new name and logo, earning them the title of Lover. After many meetings and interviews, they used a Request for Proposal to start the process of finding a graphic designer. They put together an internal board to help vote on and choose all new elements that would eventually be

presented as the brand. Employees who chose not to participate in the official board could still provide informal input. Participant 4, a Lover, only has a few full-time employees, a small Board of Directors, and many volunteers. Their name change, specifically, was the result of a three-year strategic plan developed by the Board.

“Well, it came from me and every one of them that's on the board currently . . . but every one of them were a part of the strategic plan: building, developing, creating” (Participant 4).

While they rated their rebrand as very successful, this participant would advise others to express caution when choosing a location-based name. In addition, consider the future when making initial decisions for your organization. Engaging stakeholders earlier in the process may prevent the expensive struggle of a massive rebrand later. Participant 5, a Lover, engaged students and faculty to create the best name change possible. They had at least a dozen faculty and staff meetings where changing the name was brought up, and the leadership team in charge of the organization took those thoughts into consideration when ultimately making the change. Students were communicated of the change and given the opportunity to express their thoughts and concerns as it happened. Participant 6, a Lover, engages regularly within its department and organization for feedback and with updates. The voice of the new brand was developed by a consulting group after a series of interviews with many internal stakeholders including students and faculty. The new typefaces, slogans, and imagery were all designed to reflect how the internal stakeholders described their experiences with the organization. After the new brand decisions were made, they began to communicate how to use the new brand elements. Participant 7, a

Hero, stated that all the internal communication came after the decision to merge.

However, employees were given,

“in-depth meetings about the new company and their history, got tours of all the facilities, and were gifted new logo merchandise for us to wear”

(Participant 7).

This made them feel more comfortable with the changes and gave them opportunities to ask questions about the new brand. Participant 8, a Lover, included its group of partners in the decision-making process of the merger. That group of partners also decided on the new name and logo for the organization. In the process of the merger, the staff was advised on possible changes that would reflect growth of the organization. The entire staff was also given the opportunity to vote on the final logo option. Participant 10, a Lover, included their board in all decisions that were made. Each member had the opportunity to vote and voice their opinions.

“This causes issues with having a lot of opinions and trying to make sure everyone felt heard, [but] the final product was something everyone agreed on”

(Participant 10).

Only three participants indicated low internal stakeholder engagement. Participant 1, a Believer, made all branding decisions between the owners, and any change was communicated after it happened. They designed the logo according to their vision, and part of its meaning reflects the partnership and closeness of the two owners. When faced with legal action, the two owners pivoted to another name, and instructed their employees to “answer the phones differently.” Ultimately, they rated their rebrand as successful, but noted that picking a name is possibly the most important thing a business will do. Upon

reflection, they advise to explore all current competitors to have a complete picture of what is already out there. Participant 3, a Joker, also indicated low levels of internal engagement. The communication within the organization was minimal, and employees were notified to use the new logo after it was created. They noted that there may have been several informal opinions given on the logo, but ultimately the decision was made by the preaching minister. Participant 9, also a Joker, said that very little was communicated to the magazine staff about the changes. Instead, there was much confusion amongst the organization about what the change meant for the organization. The only communication to the staff was that a change had been made.

CHAPTER IV: GENERAL DISCUSSION

To understand and evaluate stakeholder communication throughout a rebrand, I first conducted a literature review of available research. I compiled a chart of the key points of each article to create an overview of each article's discussion on the importance of external and internal communication throughout a rebrand. I then recruited businesses in Oxford, Mississippi to answer questions about their recent brand changes, and how they managed communicating to their stakeholders. Five participants participated in in-person interviews and five participants answered through a questionnaire. This data was highlighted with three different colors, blue for external engagement, pink for internal engagement, and yellow for communication that went to all stakeholders. Based on these highlights, each participant was assigned to one of four communication categories, Hero, Believer, Lover, or Joker, which defines the level of communication and engagement they underwent through their process.

The purpose of this research was initially to analyze the impact that stakeholder communication or a lack of could have on a rebrand. Ultimately, as each participant rated themselves as successful, my research did not answer my research questions. It is possible that the participants did not measure their results or that the size of the business dictates to importance of either external or internal stakeholder communication. Instead of considering this research a loss, I would like to pose two new research questions that I can answer. What is the importance of stakeholder? communication during a rebrand. How do managers approach rebranding communications with various stakeholders?

Summaries of prior research into rebranding suggested that managers would need to take great care in engaging both internal and external stakeholders throughout their rebranding process. After communicating with ten individual participants across a variety of industries, it is clear there is a disconnect between what marketers should do and what they are doing. Research does support the necessity of high internal engagement, as each participant in this category reported their rebrand to be successful. In fact, the most common regret was a lack of research at the inception of the organization which created the need to make changes down the road. These findings diverge from the literature in the discussion of the importance of external engagement. Again, all participants expressed overwhelming satisfaction with their rebrands, yet only two are categorized as having high external engagement.

Managerial Implications

Every rebrand in this study was initiated by a problem that needed to be solved. One participant was coerced into a name change and rebrand through threatened legal action, while several others used their rebrand to express a new mission or a physical location of business. The first few questions of the in-person interviews were aimed to understand what the organization was before it experienced a rebrand. Overall, managers may decide that a rebrand is necessary if the communicated brand is not being perceived as intended by their customers. Each participant experienced success upon changing some aspect of their brand.

When asked to rate their overall changes out of ten, all five of the interviewees rated themselves a ten. However, Participant 5 discussed the continued need to evolve

past the sudden change their organization made several years ago. To reflect the actual purpose and mission of their organization most accurately, this participant believes another name change will be necessary. Participant 2 briefly mentioned a recent change in marketing efforts as their organization shifts into the use of a new slogan. They indicated that while their initial rebrand was due to a restructuring of departments, the total process took several years to create the logo, name, and all imagery associated with the organization. This participant also noted that there is still a struggle to communicate what their organization does for certain stakeholder groups. This has created a need to change the marketing strategy instead of the entire brand. Participant 4 mentioned that after their organization began to operate under its new name and logo, there was a struggle to correct people from using the old logo and name. Specifically, the participant mentioned there is no way to know how many places a logo may appear, and that they experienced and still experience great difficulty in correcting it to the new name. Once an organization corrects everything internally, there are still many external groups that can access and use an old logo from the internet. The article, *Managing Corporate Rebranding*, created a framework for rebranding as a process. Authors, Daly and Moloney, theorized that entering a rebrand will not be an instantaneous process to be completed by a certain time. These three participants help to prove the validity of this theory. Each would agree that they are not done with their brand change, and that there is certainly more they can do to transition into the new brand. Managers should thoroughly evaluate all possible changes before making any decisions in the rebranding process. This includes considering future goals in a current change.

Future Research

Of the ten participants, only two could be categorized as having high external communication throughout their rebranding efforts. Many participants focused on internal communication as a priority for insight in the process. As this research was centralized in Oxford, Mississippi, it is probable that participants included internal stakeholders because they operate smaller organizations. However, the current literature suggests that external communication is extremely important in the success of any corporate rebrand. Is it possible that customer loyalty to the business owner is stronger than an attachment to the brand itself? With a larger participant pool in a wider geographic area, it may be possible to understand this discrepancy in research.

Another area for possible further study is how an organization's industry, size, structure, or ownership may affect the importance of stakeholder engagement in its rebrand. Is it possible that a certain set of these attributes may increase or decrease the need of either internal or external communication? This study focused on small businesses in a small city where only two participants reported high external engagement. However, seven of the ten reported high internal communications, and all participants expressed satisfaction with their efforts.

CONCLUSION

Rebranding is the process of changing, either instantly or methodically, key tangible aspects of an organization's brand to reflect typically an internal change. Prior literature suggests that customers are loyal to brands, and they may experience confusion, sadness, or even anger when organizations make a change. Therefore, stakeholder engagement is crucial to retaining customers and creating a positive change overall. In this study, each participant's communication is categorized by either high or low in both external and internal stakeholder engagement. After recruiting ten participants, only two reported high external engagement, while seven reported high internal engagement. This is inconsistent with the literature which suggests companies should focus on external stakeholder communication to avoid revenue loss and customer dissatisfaction. Participants were satisfied with the results of their rebrands, and none expressed any revenue or customer loss as a result.

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APPENDIX

A-1. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Can I have your permission to record?
2. Please state your name and job title.
3. How long have you been with this company and in this current role?
4. Briefly describe the rebranding efforts your company has gone through, including what specific elements of your brand changed.
5. What were the driving forces behind rebranding your business?
6. What steps did you take when determining what the rebrand would be?
7. What were challenges throughout the rebranding process?
8. How long did the entire process take?
9. Did your original vision for the rebrand change during the process?
10. When did you begin to communicate with your stakeholders about your new brand?
11. Did you engage stakeholders in the creative process for the new brand?
12. How did you engage employees and internal stakeholders in this rebrand?
13. How did you engage customers and external stakeholders in this rebrand?
14. How did you communicate this change with your employees?
15. How would you describe your employees' initial reaction to the changes?
16. Rate the success of your internal engagement efforts on a scale of 1 to 10. Explain your rating.
17. What was successful in your process of internal stakeholder engagement?
18. If you could change anything about the way you engaged your employees, what would it be?
19. How did you communicate this change with your customers?
20. How would you describe their initial reaction to the changes?
21. Rate the success of your external efforts on a scale of 1 to 10. Explain your rating.
22. What was successful in your process of external stakeholder engagement?
23. If you could change anything about the way you engaged your employees, what would it be?
24. How would you recommend to someone else looking to rebrand their business, the best way to engage with your stakeholders?

25. Was there any confusion or other negative emotion from your customers regarding the new brand?
26. Did you experience any revenue loss upon switching to the new brand?
27. Overall, in your rebranding process, is there anything you would do differently?
28. Do you feel that your rebrand was successful overall?

Appendix A-2. INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Participant 1

Abigail Vandiver 0:02

Okay, so if you will just introduce yourself and make sure to include your job title,

Participant 1 0:09

okay? I'm Participant 1. I'm a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine DVM, I'm owner and veterinarian of Animal Hospital here in Oxford, Mississippi.

Abigail Vandiver 0:19

Okay, and then how long have you owned been with _____ in years? So

Participant 1 0:24

we opened April the 18th of 2022. Okay, so only we're almost at a year. Okay. Yeah.

Abigail Vandiver 0:32

Um, okay, so I guess with that, um, did you prior to working here to do work for a different vet or?

Participant 1 0:42

Yes, so, Dr. Wilson and I, we both worked for animal clinic of Oxford. Okay, it's overall Jackson Avenue, right and in the CVS/Sonic area, and we literally grew up there. I started there in my fresh spring break in my freshman year of undergrad. I would was it started well, but I would come back and work during my times off from school because I'm from New Albany. So I'll just drive back and forth. And if we bill and in July of 2021, they told us that they were selling to a corporate company. No. Yes. Don't have to help anyone. So we were almost shell shocked for a little while. And when it really came down to like signing the contract on the day I was like my guts telling me no, and there was a noncompete calls for a year. And if we had signed the contract, we will work for them for at least a year there was a minimum a minimal signing bonus. And then we would have stayed with them for a year at least longer if we wanted to. But then after we decided to quit and go elsewhere, those five mile radius sign or non compete calls. And that was what really got me because it wasn't so much the space that we had to move out of it was more that if you looked at the fine print there was we couldn't use the same vendors. And stuff like that, that they used. So for for a year. And so that's there's only minimal like five Yeah, good vendors for

Abigail Vandiver 2:13

say like, vendors are

Participant 1 2:14

there. And so So anyway, that was definitely what helped me out and and another thing was during that year's time if I didn't go straight into practice, that gives time for my clients to find somebody new develop new habits, you know, all that kind of stuff. And

so it was and they weren't offering me enough to buy my future, if that makes sense. So, yeah, it didn't feel right.

Abigail Vandiver 2:36

Okay. And then did you guys like, You guys didn't start here, right in this building two

Participant 1 2:45

doors down. So this used to be a church. Yes, lot. So we are technically in the section sanctuary. And then there's kind of like it was a little daycare building. And then the next building was the seminary building, and that's where we started out and it was office space at the very front if you see rooms for that and then a big long hallway with huge classrooms and then at the very back was a kind of a what I'm trying to say like a eating in space, you know, like, fitness center, but like whatever churches call it but anyway, so like a little kitchen area. And so we did surgery and X ray and all that stuff back there had all that installed back there and then in the front offices, we did all of our appointments, so it was very makeshift, but clients found us and they weren't they didn't care. They were just we were glad to have somewhere to practice. They were glad that we were practicing still and so I think good we're there for seven months. Right? Okay.

Abigail Vandiver 3:39

And then okay, so then I guess describe your company super new but describe like what rebranding efforts you went through because y'all moved.

Participant 1 3:48

Yeah, so well, so it kind of a funny story story. I mean, it's funny now but in the town, it really wasn't that funny. We started out as veterinary hospital. But there is a clinic in our hospital surgery center in Tupelo that is veterinary surgery. Okay, so because we didn't know we were new to this whole thing. When we just put out there on Facebook. Hey, we're gonna be Veterinary Hospital. That person who owns that place got onto the Mississippi Secretary of State's website and reserved all the things so when and we and I he graduated a year before I did his wife graduated with me from vet school. And so we knew each other and there were multiple conversations of it's not going to be a big deal. We're gonna play fair if somebody calls because they're like a referral center. So if I have like a dog this needs sticks, and I don't feel comfortable doing that. We send them to them. We don't but we send them elsewhere but exactly. And so he because he does get referrals from Oxford from just the surrounding areas. He was concerned that that was going to be confusing. And we were like, We're gonna play fair, it's fun, you know, but ultimately, he didn't own the name. So we could keep that but we wound up going to small animal hospital instead. So we got a cease and desist letter threatening a lawsuit all the fun stuff, you know, so in in the moment, it was not very fun, but looking back, it's it is that we're happy. Nobody cared. We put the name out there, but we just nobody really noticed the change. Let's put it that way. We're not that far into it. So there was some paperwork to figure out new and all that kind of stuff, but we

Abigail Vandiver 5:32

is that part of your logo, like the small animal hospital?

Participant 1 5:35

So yeah, so our logo is a _____, and then the center like what would be like the yellow thing that comes out of the center is a paw print. And then at the bottom, yes, _____ s in big and then small animal hospital. Um,

Abigail Vandiver 5:49

okay, so you kind of touched on driving forces. I guess you can answer this way too. From the beginning when you guys were picking the _____ name, kind of how did you go about just choosing it?

Participant 1 6:04

And so when all that came up to we were like, okay, because like I said, there were multiple conversations with that guy. And so we were like, well, do we need to just do a different flower and be dogwood veterinary hospital, you know, something like that. But we liked that _____ is a Mississippi thing. We like that. It's a southern flower. We both just drift towards that. And so we went back and forth on do we want to stick with that? Because we were very committed to that we liked our logo, we didn't want to change the picture, you know, and all that kind of stuff. Thank you. And so we went back and forth and then ultimately decided we were gonna stick with that and stick with the Veterinary Hospital at that time until we got the cease and desist letter and and that's when we just were like, well, we'll just be when we looked at throughout the state. We also looked at there's a _____ Animal Hospital, a _____. We tried not to come to be the same thing, even if it was like South Mississippi and they weren't a referral center or whatever. We tried to be different. And so that's where the Small Animal Park came up.

Abigail Vandiver 7:08

Okay, that makes sense. Okay, so I guess your challenges were that they were they were they were cease

and desist. So okay, so I guess how, when slash How did you start to communicate this change?

Um, I guess I you kind of touched on a little bit. I'm sure you didn't really make a whole big deal about we're changing our name because you obviously don't want to stir up like someone's trying to sue us.

Participant 1 7:37

But I wanted to put things out there that said, you know, this is not playing fair. Here's the deal. We'll change our name, but ultimately, because we weren't we were only a couple of months. Really in to being the name out there and stuff like that. We Well, I should take that back. We announced I guess in February or March 1 part of March and like I said, we opened about six weeks later. So it had been about three, four months that we had had that name down. _____ t even practicing for a couple of months under it. It

wasn't terrible to change like people just even our receipt still says because the bank had it all logged in and it was it takes a whole huge process to change it. I don't think anybody even notices it one little thing it says that so Okay.

Abigail Vandiver 8:30

Um How did you I guess some of these are like real niche, but how did you communicate this change with your employees specifically?

Participant 1 8:41

Right? Yeah. Yeah. Well, I mean, most of our employees had heard the whole store they've been part of the whole story. And at that time, we were small enough. We only had like two or three employees. Separate from Dr. And so they they were as mad as we were right in there with us. And so I was frustrated, I guess you could say, and so they they rolled with it, you know, they just answered the phone a little bit differently. You know, that was a little bit of an adjustment, stuff like that. But that was the main thing. And we had banners that we had made that was the only thing because we were so temporary down there. We had a banner in the road and in one of the building and so we had a document they just put a almost like a band aid over it with the new name and covered we just had to have it measured and then they just kind of cover that Veterinary Hospital and put

Abigail Vandiver 9:26

small so good document really pulled for me so many times.

Okay, and then guys guess thinking back to like, Oh, no. Some of these like don't really apply to you. I have so many questions on here. Um

Participant 1 9:50

and something about like rebranding ourselves to when people find this and they're like, well, a lot of people just thought we left that we moved and your son had breast cancer and she survived it and she's great and all the things but some people saw our names moved from the engine had it just been her name. They were there. I'm sure they would have thought I think some people even asked if she passed away like that something big happened. You know, but my name leaving to from the front of that building was a little bit more like okay, something's going on, you know, and so when they finally found us, they all most people want to know what happened like where Why did you move what how do you know and it really comes down to just be in business. I talked about to reading one of my former bosses yesterday, I was like, Hey, call this woman about a goat. If you don't mind, that kind of thing. And so it came down to it wasn't nothing personal, it just mean business. And we really had been promised to buy that clinic for years. And so there were no hurt feelings. There was like leaving home but in the grand scheme of things she's recording.

Abigail Vandiver 10:53

Yeah, I can stop it. Sorry. I know I'm also

Participant 1 10:56

last I saw your I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Abigail Vandiver 10:59

No, you're good.

Participant 1 10:59

I think you got it. Okay. So we've been promised about that practice and in the grand scheme of things, it just didn't work. And so when people found us they wanted to know what happened. And so we told them, you know, they sold to a corporate company and we want to be that hometown. We want to be able to price our things, how we want to price that we want to be able to treat things how we want to treat, you know, with a lot of a lot of corporate things there. They told us when the when they were trying to get us to sign the contract, they were like, Oh, the only thing that'll change is the way the time employees clock in and the credit card machines, you won't notice anything, but now they have I mean, we of course keep up with all the people we used to work with and it's all even the atmosphere is different there. You know, and they they're constantly changing people who weren't there and all that stuff. It's just not not what was expected. I guess you could say so. Anyway, so a lot of clients even come in and say, Oh, we're so thankful we found you. And we just tell them it just really comes down to business. We wanted to do our do it our way. So that's what we're trying to push to your hometown that sort of a corporate company owner Okay.

Abigail Vandiver 12:08

Um Okay, let's How would you recommend like to someone who's like looking to and I guess like in this can be from like, obviously changing the little part of your name, but even just like starting your business in the first place, how would you recommend to someone or would you give them any advice? If they're like, looking to rebrand or kind of change something about their identity? Do

Participant 1 12:32

you have anything you would? Yeah, I mean, I think I think to start even before you even branded at all look and see what's out there, what you're up against, you know, so you have fewer problems, but if something comes up, you know, stay true to yourself as to what you want in a name and logo and that kind of stuff and work with somebody you know, that can make that happen. We had a great, she's a friend of ours. And she just that's what she does. And she she'd give us multiple options about what the logo could look like and that kind of stuff. And it was it we knew that that's what we wanted. So when we had to change the name, that's why we stuck with that , you know, and so, in there, of course, we, we thought about like, sophomore animal hospital or you know, all manner of like Oxford names, but, you know, if we'd said sophomore or something along those lines, then location specific location specific you can't really move that and take it with you and you know, all that stuff. And so, yeah, we thought a lot about and went back and forth a lot about what we you know, Xillia animal hospital would be in clusters, only a drive and all that stuff, but we just Yeah, we really flipped

favorite the love that logo, and really wanted to stick with it. So find what you love and make it work. You know

Abigail Vandiver 13:49

how long I guess or not how long but when the time you left you don't want it Yeah. Boxford in it from the time that you like started and y'all opened kind of what did your communication look like to I guess like your external stakeholders, like any of your clients, like how did you communicate like, Hey, this is this is we're moving through.

Participant 1 14:15

So it was hard because it was like down the wire of not signing that contract at Animal Clinic. And there was really no good way to like steal names and numbers. You know, that kind of thing. I'll be honest. Facebook went a long way Instagram, that kind of stuff. Just our personal stuff. We actually wound up at Animal Care Center which is the clinic across from Kroger right by delta dog for about five months. And the plan was to purchase that practice. And they gave us a home for five months. We fell in love with everybody that worked there. Dr. Solomon was great to let us like practice and have a home for a little while. But um, because we went from like, I think we were off for like a week, October. Middle October. So November 1, we started at Animal Care Center. And so it was kind of all in the works when we were trying to figure out if we were going to sign the contract or not because we were asking after settlement, hey, what's your retirement plan, what things look like, you know, that kind of thing. And so we were trying to figure all that out and he let us work there while we figure it out. But we came to the conclusion that he valued his practice and this we evaluated it this and it just what just wouldn't have happened, which was fine. We've got found some great financing through Bank of America. And here we are. And so we were blessed to have a home for that time. But clients have moved from animal clinic to Animal Care Center. They found us because of like I said social media posts, that kind of thing. A lot of people just put it out there shared and all that kind of stuff. And then from there, you know, here and so so they've moved a lot of content moved all over town with us literally. But they're Oxford is one of those towns where you got that hometown feel still despite the university and all that kind of stuff. And so people are rooting for you, you know, when it really comes down to it. And even some of the clients were like, you know, I've been that go into animal clinic for 30 something years, that's all I know. And when they found out its corporate own now they're like, well, that's not hometown. Anyway, a lot of you know I'd rather stick with somebody so against their occupation. Exactly. And so that has helped us a lot. So we've tried to advertise to where we feel is valuable. We did the football invitation magazine, and we probably should do another one soon but stuff like that. With that you can kind of pick and choose the signs that are in trade on soccer fields. We did one of those so our names and all that stuff and and a lot of people know us out there because they're kids and so now they know where we are, you know they can kind of put two and two together. And so and plus our week like literally live out there. So just a sponsor out there. Anyway, just little things and even things that Dr. Wilson and I had ideas for when we were at animal clinic that we couldn't do because we didn't have the I mean, we essentially ran the place, but we didn't have the signature to sign on. The check,

you know. And so even with that kind of stuff we're getting to do how we want to do it and it's been fun, hard, but fun.

Abigail Vandiver 17:11

Okay, um, I guess the last thing or two things wine, is there anything you would do differently and I guess creating your initial brand and then in your little rebranding that you did

Participant 1 17:21

um I guess we should have just in the initial part just steered away from the veterinary those two together because that was the issue and when we saw that he was going to even say anything about it. He called me like, the day after I posted it or something like that and, and said something and I was like, Oh, well, I'll talk to Dr. Wilson about it, but I don't think it's gonna be a problem, you know? And I guess in my mind, everybody plays fair. Everybody's happy and life goes on and it's no big deal but I guess not in his mind. So I think he was concerned that his wife who is a general practitioner, but helps with his veterinary surgery that she would ultimately become want to open kind of a general practitioner or practice part and wouldn't need that veterinary hospital names. So, anyway, I think there was a lot went into it. So anyway, yes, just do your research to start and then from the rebranding part, I mean, stick to what you still want, but make it work, you know, which is kind of kind of the even from the beginning if you don't have to rebrand I guess, when you're even figuring out your initial brand. Figure out what's gonna work the best but what you would stick with who you are and what you love.

Abigail Vandiver 18:34

And then overall Do you feel like your brand creation rebranding, slash in the middle was successful? Do you like it? You stick with it?

Participant 1 18:44

Yes. And we can move all over town. It can. It kind of sticks. I mean, it's just you know, we're to women's Steel s. I mean one of my favorite things is that middle out front, I wanted some you know, just centerpiece of that wall when we were when we were figuring this layout out and we knew we were gonna have kind of a wall right behind reception area. We I was like, I want a backlit with the paw print and all this stuff. And I think it's d&d Crystal middles.

Abigail Vandiver 19:14

Great. I stared at it for like a good five. It's awesome that I was

Participant 1 19:18

like, that's what I want. And they made it happen. I mean, like, I just had to say yes. And so they were talking about painting and stuff like that was like no, I want like the bronze Yeah, I want it to the the light behind it to make it stand out. Anyway, so. So yeah, just making those decisions and having that say in that kind of stuff, it's fun. But no, I think we would stick with what we've done so far. Other than maybe just going ahead and

changing before we really got into a lot of the paperwork and all that kind of stuff. Because it was confusing and kind of hard all along the way because at first when we opened we didn't really have a location so it was that six weeks between leaving Animal Care Center and being in that seminary building, which was the people who owned this property while they were building this out were very generous in letting us be two doors down they were rooting for us and stuff and so so they in that process we my address was on a lot of stuff my telephone number and so once we got all that kind of setup then all that had to be changed, you know, then the name change and that either so so yeah, try to I guess be more prepared to would go a long way. Just in thinking that through before he you really get all that paperwork rolling. Okay,

Participant 2

Abigail Vandiver 0:00

It doesn't. It's just so that if I have questions about something that gets said later, I don't have to come on. Sets recording there we go. Okay, if at any time you want to start, let me know. If you don't want to answer a question, obviously you can just say pass or skip. But for the first thing, please state your name and job title.

Participant 2 0:29

Participant 2 and I'm the executive director.

Abigail Vandiver 0:32

And then how long have you been with visit? in this current role?

Participant 2 0:36

So this role, the fall of 2019 was when I became the director so but I've worked or since 20. Oh, yeah. 2000.

Abigail Vandiver 0:55

So yes. Okay. Um, briefly describe, just like summary of kind of what the rebranding efforts were, that was gone through including like what specific elements changed? So,

Participant 2 1:08

ours is sort of complicated and that so the is the appointed citizens who are our fiduciary oversight, and they are appointed by the mayor and Board of Aldermen. Part of the legislation that gives the lodging tax to us. So a 2% tax is collected and then it kind of is funneled through the city but it goes straight to the actual Tourism Council. So the legislation not only established a tax for the hotels, it established a board basically so that's called the action Tourism Council. So technically, I'm an employee of the Tourism Council does appointed by the city and their volunteer, so it's kind of a different sort of deal. So the city had determined that their conference in or the Oxford Conference Center and the Tourism Council or the tourism bureau is worse called some times or destination marketing organization. There's lots of different terms in the industry, but that the two would kind of be under one umbrella under the Oxford Tourism Council. So when I was starting in Oman, we were the Oxford Convention and Visitors Bureau. So Convention Center, Tourism Bureau all in one governed by this board. And within that there was a director of the Conference Center and your Director of Tourism, and we operated that way for probably 1012 years. And in 2013, we decided the city kind of decided, let's let the conference in or may more direct city department and not be under the role of the cop the Oxford Yeah, Tourism Council chiefs, and then we'll just let tourism just be I mean, it was for some Council, which was really a good move because our offices were the Conference Center was very confusing. to kind of get our brand out into the community. We're not just the Conference Center. We're also marketing Oxford. We're doing this destination development kind of like festivals and things that are bringing people in but that has nothing to do come on center. So it's just confusing. So we were it was an amicable split. And then that kind of created the awkward tourism I mean,

the Oxford comments in our brand and then _____, which right now within the tourism industry, kind of visit and then the destination is very popular. So visit Jackson visit Mississippi is our state organization. Not everyone does that. Like for instance Tupelo? They're not visit Tupelo, but we went with _____. It explains who you are explains what we're doing. We're trying to get people to visit so we liked kind of going in that theme. And so we rebranded then and then a couple of years later 2018 We did a rebrand and we didn't change our logo all that much. Then we just kind of updated it. And then we also did it to go with some ad campaigns that we're doing, which we're currently still running. We don't really have like a real slogan. We use this a lot in our ad campaigns where your type and so it's like being a typewriter and it all has to kind of do with Bogner things things. So we really liked it and you know, and you can kind of use it for anything. So if you're advertising for a golf trip or a girls weekend, you know we can always kind of put a spin on where your time so kind of where we are now. So we've had a couple of rebrands that the _____ has been pretty steady now for for quite some time. To be great.

Abigail Vandiver 5:03

Um I guess you kind of touched on this. No, no, you did. He did like the next four. Well, I have this long list of questions because I have to have all this approved by this board that says I'm not going to poke people with needles anyway. It doesn't really apply to me, but I have to have all these questions approved so I have like 45 questions. I'll ask you all of them but I have to turn in anything that I can possibly ask. Um, okay. So I guess with that you touched on some driving forces, what were like kind of challenges you faced or like what was difficult in that process?

Participant 2 5:36

Okay, yeah. So our biggest struggle is still is a little better but has always been because we are touching the visitor so much and we are advertising we rarely artist entail and so a lot of times locals don't understand what we're here for. Alarm to me live in a city, especially a small town, you don't think of it as a vacation destination.

Abigail Vandiver 6:08

So I'm from Birmingham, I'm right there.

Participant 2 6:11

So it's a tough it's tough for people to understand why we would want more people to come into the streets and you know, so really the biggest challenge for us is many people understand the benefit of tourism and the benefit of having _____ here. So we just come back all those complaints which they're not always but if there are negative stereotypes or complaints, then we just kind of combat them with the economic impacts that we provide to the city. You know, you couldn't have beautiful flowers on the square if it weren't for this tourism money or you couldn't have people from Atlanta coming here and drugs and using spending money in your shops that you really can't support because our cost of living is so much different than theirs or cost of earning. So it's different than there. So that's been kind of our biggest challenge is making people understand what we do know. Okay.

Abigail Vandiver 7:12

From like, start in 2015 to like, finish and then I guess I'll read it in 2018. But like how long how long did that process take?

Participant 2 7:23

So, somewhere here number but I would say we have to do that as we are ever government agency or city. We have to do an RFP or request for proposal anytime we're doing any sort of big project that might cost really more than \$5,000 So that kind of takes a little bit. So we put out a proposal after we get that approved by our board and there's usually several weeks that we get for people to see it we advertise it we answer questions. So usually about a month after you put it out to get the bids back. And then once you get the bids, you can do interviews for those people. And in the case of a rebrand. You don't always have to do with the lowest price necessarily because it's called a service contract. And so, in other words, pay for what you did to the thing you might like an agency that has a different spin on things. They might be more expensive, you know, they might offer more services so that can sometimes take a little while. Because you usually interview them. We have some committee from our board, and then we get approved and then you can start the work and so it can be probably anywhere from like a three to six month process. I would say not longer than six months for sure, either. Time and then when we did kind of the little change that I'm talking about the way or type that was that was a lot faster. That was probably a couple of months. Because we already had established the brand we were just sort of tweaking to kind of update it Yeah. Okay

Abigail Vandiver 9:23

how did you engage kind of your employees and internal stakeholders so I mean your board like any of those people, how did you engage them in this like, rebrand more of a need for rebrand How do you communicate?

Participant 2 9:34

Absolutely. So we really engaged our staff during the RFP process. So we all have different elements of like sales and digital advertising and festival coordination and sitting on that board. So what is it that you see that you think, needs to be communicated internally, and then let's build the RFP from what you say. And then what do you know because we have outside sales, people too and international sales. What do you see that we need to kind of build into the RFP. So that's, that's kind of how we connected with the staff. And then we did the same with our board. And then any other stakeholders so like, for our case, we might talk with our chamber of commerce. So we work closely with our economic development office, our farms counsel, some different people like that. Just to see if there's anything that we were forgetting in the RFP, so we put the RFP out and then when we were interviewing, we had our some of our board members that did all those interviews. And then usually after it was selected, we would also then kind of get a bigger stakeholder group together. Maybe those people that I mentioned before would then come and kind of look at like okay, these are our designs which do you think you know, kind of speaks to you and then would be to have a tally and take the vote so they were putting through how those times and again, that's just Yeah, trying to be really

transparent and our brand means a lot more. You know, we don't it's so different from a private business. So you know, we just didn't want to work here's personality to come out.

Abigail Vandiver 11:38

Yeah, yeah. Um, did you speaking strictly for internal Did you face any like, backlash or like, was there any, like, big concern that God raised or?

Participant 2 11:52

Not really, most of that was all during the campus lit in 2018. When we were deciding like, okay, are we splitting the Tourism Council Nabil I really commerce center. That was sort of more if there was any conflict, and I mean, it was very minimal, but that would be the only time that we really noticed any things

Abigail Vandiver 12:18

and then moving towards external How did you engage like any of your I mean, I guess the City of Oxford but I'm also like, you guys said you don't really advertise the City of Oxford so I mean, anybody that you advertise you, how did you engage them with the rebrand like, Did you publish it or did you just kind of want

Participant 2 12:36

we didn't watch and did a like kind of a media blitz about it, press release. And I mean, you know, like, changed everything everywhere. So I mean, it was pretty much just here we are your weekend. Every ad was different in every video, all the stuff so

Abigail Vandiver 13:02

did you get any? Like external backlash when you said people have complaints but it's not really about your brand

Participant 2 13:11

external most people outside about to a completely always understand it's just our biggest struggle is making residents understand like what we do, we don't just learn Double Decker. You know, we're advertising all year long. And I think a lot of times people think that the events that we're advertising, we're also planning and that's also not true, you know, so we're not going to film this. They have their own board and there are people who handle the advertising we sponsor it but can we don't? Yeah, yeah, that's interesting. Yeah, I think that it is.

Abigail Vandiver 13:55

Um, let's see if you could rate your success of your internal engagement efforts on a scale of one to 10 What would you give it?

Participant 2 14:08

I feel like an eight are pretty good. Yeah.

Abigail Vandiver 14:15

Um Um Is there anything you would do differently in the way you engaged with your stakeholders in the process, if not totally okay, but

Participant 2 14:39

I don't really remember there being a huge issue, so probably not. We're. We're in the process of going through some RFPs for things next year. And so we're kind of modeling it after what we did last time and just worked Yeah. Tourism Council who ever wants to be involved in that process? They're kind of our council members who get to me and so I feel like you get the most out of a voluntary role if they're into something. Yes. Yeah.

Abigail Vandiver 15:15

Yeah. What would you recommend? Like if you had a recommendation or some advice to someone looking to rebrand their business? Like what would you tell them?

Participant 2 15:27

Um, I mean, I think that I think that you know, people a lot of times try to encompass sort of everything that they can do in a logo, and I think that's pretty much impossible. So I think you know, clean to the point. Like us there's not even a picture of the city at Oxford in our logo. It's literally just the words. And so I think that sometimes, I mean, if you were, say, a coastal destination, of course, put away on there that makes sense or something that looks like water. But for us, we're so many things that there's just no way to really dial it down to like design and if we were to put the outline of say the square well, there's lots of other neighborhoods and districts in our city and so you know, some people only come here to go to things at the university. And so that we're kind of leave that out. Sometimes if we just average those things in red and blue, we lose some people because they don't want to come here because they see some other schools in tech. We kind of had to be careful. One thing we did, we did kind of go with that powder blue because it is sort of neutral. It does look good. Next to the university colors. It also does not find the green at the city, London. So we did kind of have to talk through that a lot. And like think of who we're going to be back often. And the city has that kind of circle. And so that's kind of part of like our element. But I think I would just tell people to try to like keep it less is more.

Abigail Vandiver 17:14

Okay, good. Um, I feel like you've probably already said this You feel overall that your rebrand was successful.

Participant 2 17:25

issue. Yeah, and that's, that's kind of bigger than the brand. You know, that's our responsibility to get out and talk to stakeholders. engage our board and like civic organizations and things like that. So

Abigail Vandiver 17:45

I think that's all I have. So

Participant 3

Abigail Vandiver 0:00

Come on second. Okay, so we'll just start by, could you state your name and your like job title at your current place of business?

Participant 3 0:10

My name is Participant 3, I am the preaching minister at the .

Abigail Vandiver 0:16

Okay. And then how long have you been with in this current role?

Participant 3 0:23

It will be five years in July.

Abigail Vandiver 0:26

Okay, great. And then briefly describe like the rebranding efforts that your church has gone through including like, which specific elements of your brand?

Participant 3 0:37

Well, I don't know. I don't know if you can legitimately call it a rebranding effort. After I got here, became aware. I became I became aware that we didn't have any consistency and people business cards or letterhead or anything and there weren't any graphics to use and so I talked to a local graphic designer wanted to get you know a number of logo graphics that we could use in you know, in our in published publication you know, things we printed and, and things we did online. I can use all the PowerPoints and emails. So that was basically what we did. I don't like to sit I don't know that you can legitimately say it was a rebranding effort. Since COVID. Everything's upside down. We're still trying to figure out where we're going and what we're doing.

Abigail Vandiver 1:58

Yeah, I mean, maybe just a branding in general it sounds like but anything's useful. Um, so with that kind of, I guess you touched on it a little bit, but like, what were the driving forces kind of behind the why, like, why did you want to get a concise logo and kind of, you know, why did why was that important to you?

Participant 3 2:22

Because we didn't feel like it didn't seem like we had any consistency. Everybody just kind of did their own thing. It whatever you know, and made their own stuff up and I wanted something that would be what would be identifying the across the board.

Abigail Vandiver 2:43

And then so when you kind of decided that this is what you wanted to do, what steps did you take kind of throughout the process like from realizing there was a need to executing it? Again, I'm sure No, it's okay. When you realize that there was a need for this breed like brand, essentially, what steps did you take from like discovering the need to like

reaching out and executing it? Kind of to now like what did that look like in practical steps?

Participant 3 3:20

Well, basically, I got I got Go ahead. To to approach to talk to with a graphic designer and and went through a whole process of exploring ideas with him and sending I don't know how many times you know, he sent sent. What's the word not proofs, but

Abigail Vandiver 3:46
drafts, yeah, proofs.

Participant 3 3:49

Proofs a good word back and forth. Until we finally you know, came up with a design that I liked. I primarily did it myself, although I did get some feedback from other people in the office. Hey, what do you think about this type of thing?

Abigail Vandiver 4:10

How did you communicate to kind of your internal stakeholders so like your office staff, maybe people, deacons and elders, how did you communicate to them about this new logo and like how you were going to use it?

Participant 3 4:24

Well, once he sent us sent via a package with with a whole bunch of different logos, you know, styles and formats. I just distributed everybody a copy of the files, so that they had them on their, you know, in their possession to use and it was such a big number of styles stylizations it allowed people to stay within the family of logos and use their own creativity which one they wanted to use, which ones fit best with whatever they were working on. Sharing centric.

Abigail Vandiver 5:11

Did you face any, like pushback or negativity? I mean, there's people that always complain about stuff, but did any Did you face any any negativity when you were trying to get the brand together? That's good. Is there anything you would do differently about the way that you chose a logo or kind of, like, rolled out that logo

Participant 3 5:42

you know, I'll just shoot this they're fairly smooth. The biggest difficulty was the interaction between myself and the graphic designer not not from the sense that we had problems with one another just you know, working through the different proofs and concepts to we finally nailed down looks like or what I like, so no, there's no issues at all.

Abigail Vandiver 6:06

Okay, um, see what else

How did you do anything like specific or special to engage your like church members or church audience about the new logo or did you just start introducing it?

Participant 3 6:29

We just started using it. There was no you know, announcement or anything you just started showing up. Okay. It's very simple. There's nothing nothing major, you know, eye catching and then design. There's nothing you know, it's just very simple. Nope, no, no real complexity to it at all.

Abigail Vandiver 7:00

Okay, well, I guess the last thing is if like, if you were giving any someone advice about like, creating a logo or you know, choosing a brand or rebranding, is there anything that you learned and there might not be but is there anything you learned that you would want to tell someone else? Oh, yeah, take

Participant 3 7:17

your time. Because once you spent your money, you know you've got if you end up with something you're really like, well, you wasted your time and your money and everything else. So take your time and and go back and forth and cheat until it works for you.

Abigail Vandiver 7:33

Okay, cool. Well, I think that's all the questions I have for you. A lot of the other ones kind of pertain to like a whole company overhaul which you guys obviously didn't do. So. Thank you so much for your time less. I hope you have a great Friday afternoon. Great and

Participant 4

Participant 4 0:00

So you didn't set that up so you can put your, your pieces together. Yes,

Abigail Vandiver 0:03

it's it's, um, they won't get the recording, like records so I can like re listen to it later when I'm writing my interview. Okay, um,

Participant 4 0:12

if you need to put it on my desk too, I mean I can and you can get that shirt as well.

Abigail Vandiver 0:20

Please state your name and job title.

Participant 4 0:22

Participant 4, founding executive director for _____,

Abigail Vandiver 0:26

and how long have you been with this company in your current role?

Participant 4 0:30

So I started the program in 2018 and I started as a technically I started the program in 2015. And we just had a board and I was the president of the board. And then in 2018, I stepped down as board president and was hired as an interim executive director. And at that point, that was in March and then in September, I took on the full time role of executive director

Abigail Vandiver 0:59

briefly describe like, what your rebranding efforts looked like what you've gone through, including what specific elements of your brand changed.

Participant 4 1:06

So we started out as possible Fayette County, because that's where we started. The program with a goal to expand into other counties within a 10 year timeframe. And so in 2018 to 2022 we were Kosovo Fayette County, and then we expanded into Lee County in 2022. And at that time, we changed our name to be able to encompass the area that we were going to serve and so we changed it to cost of North Mississippi. And during that time, we had to while the national organization has standards about their our logo, they had to create all of our logos we have to be in line with their brand, the national brand, colors all of that stuff but we on a on a local level. We had to change obviously our logo, get a new logo, and then we had to change everything that had our logo on it. So that would be anything from brochures, business cards, email signatures, anything that's a classical Fayette County we had to change to North Mississippi. See what else do we have to change? Literally anything that had the cost of logo on it change from Fayette County to _____ One thing that we did add, which has been a national brand, more of a campaign for the national organization is the tagline. So it used

to be I am for the child, and then they did a campaign which is now the brand of the national organization and local programs can use it, but it's now changed a child's story. So we can either just have the solid logo, the cost logo with our program on it, or we can have the logo with our program and then change change a child's story which is trademarked by the national organization.

Abigail Vandiver 3:04

Okay, so how long did the entire process take from like deciding on North Mississippi to getting all of your emails and all of your logos changed?

Participant 4 3:14

So the process of deciding the name was was a pretty big conversation with myself in the board, figuring out you know, these are the counties that we want to go to. Technically, it's Northeast Mississippi and the direction that we would go but when discussing whether or not to be called costs of Northeast Mississippi or cost of North Mississippi was is there any chance that we're gonna go west or we're gonna go south? And so that was something that we discussed a lot and like, Are we closing ourself off but by changing the name to Northeast Mississippi instead of North Mississippi and so that was a conversation when creating a strategic plan back in 2021. The end of that year we we worked on that and so ultimately decided to didn't work Mississippi in case we decide to expand into other counties that we have not discussed, which the end of last year we did. We decided to add yalobusha, which is Water Valley onto one of our counties. And technically that's not Northeast Mississippi, it's more south and so I was thankful that we did that because it doesn't, it doesn't really cut us off from being able to go other directions. As far as things getting changed the logo, it's so we did this in January of 22. And I'm still still changing things. It's what what we've learned or what I've learned really is that you don't realize everywhere that your logo is you know, in end your name itself until you make you have everything done. And then what you're constantly trying to update things. Of course, we have the internet these days. And so a lot when we started the program, a lot of articles came out various things. And so, you know, it could be something as simple as okay, we're going to change our website, and you have to change the domain name, but you have to link it you have to link your old website, your old domain name to your new one, and at what point do you let that one go so people can find it's the same website but it's still we want to make sure that it's under the right name. I would say for anybody that changes or rebrands whether it's logo or name change that you're going to constantly find where your old brand or your old logo or your old website, name, whatever it might be, is going to be out there somewhere just because it doesn't, you know this day and age with the internet you'd never know how to get rid of things and you know what someone Google? I think it stays on.

Abigail Vandiver 5:49

Okay, so how August 1 of all when, after you decided obviously with your board what the name change was going to be when did you start communicating with your employees and your donors and your coordinators? And even your your customers or not customers? Not the right word, but even your families like when did you start

communicating that name change, I guess? You know, it's more important to some other than others, but

Participant 4 6:17

yeah, since the beginning, even when I was just the only employee here I've always since day one. I've always said yes, we're in Lafayette County. This is the county we serve. But there's a vision there. I mean, I communicate that to everybody, every person that interviews to be volunteers. Every staff member, any pipe, anybody that's ever been on the board, and that is on the board currently, I've always communicated that while we at that time while we were one county program that there is a division that grow which means that a name change is going to come now looking back on it. I wish that I had started out as just because it there's a lot of difficulty in changing the name and and just kind of you know, we changed our mission we changed our values. What our I mean that are bad. We added our values changed our vision and our purpose to to to really encompass North Mississippi rather than just Lafayette County. So I guess you could say that I mean, while we didn't change our logo that we had to rebrand a lot of internal stuff that that would encompass more than one county.

Abigail Vandiver 7:27

How did you engage? I guess specifically internal stakeholders. So I'm in really your board. How did you start this process of changing with the board? Did it come from you or did it come from them?

Participant 4 7:38

Well, it came from me and every one of them that's on the board currently, we're there were some added ones, but every one of them were a part of the strategic plan. Building, developing creating and so that was a big part of it. You know, when we talk about our strategic plan, it's a three year plan but a lot of it has to do with just because I've been

Abigail Vandiver 8:02

with my mom does that I

Participant 4 8:04

mean, just like growing you know, spending some more children with the city but also like growing and enhancing community partnerships become a lighthouse brand. That because our goal is that we are we have a good program. We have a sustainable program. We have something to offer the community, but you have to do that to become that you need to become that White House brand to attract people to come to you whether it's senators, volunteers, board member staff, whatever it might be. And so, that was kind of a something that that we discussed when talking about, we had already changed we are discussing a change and what we wanted it to be but we talked about, you know, a comprehensive communication system for the cost of North Mississippi network. We talk about a formalized marketing plan to increase awareness and then create an app create an outreach plan to educate local leaders in the community about and so a lot of times I'm at this point a lot of times when I'm talking to different groups, I'm saying you know, we started out as one county program, we weren't possible Fayette County, and then kind

of transitioning to that while we changed our name and who we are now and who we plan to be in the future. So and I didn't I didn't answer the part about dinners that I was gonna say that a big part of that we would just went out and then change we we send out you know, in our newsletter and just keep them informed about that.

Abigail Vandiver 9:28

What do you think you did well, in changing you're changing your your name and your vision and your mission and stuff. Yeah,

Participant 4 9:35

I think really, when we look at the name change, just allows for the public to know that we are a region wide program. But I think we communicated that well. I think that it was a positive change. It wasn't necessarily a change because something went wrong, which sometimes that's why people might change their name to get, you know, I guess a bad reputation away and but I think that moving towards a bigger program was really, really the heart of why we changed that name. And then what was the second part of that?

Abigail Vandiver 10:12

Just what do you think you did? Well, I mean, the whole process

Participant 4 10:15

Oh, and then as far as the mission and all of that I think we shortened it to be to where if I'm going out and I'm telling somebody what our mission is. I don't need to look at a sheet of paper that I'm able it's a one sentence mission, and you're able to share that was everybody. And I think as far as we added values, and so that's, you know, essentially like what does the program stand for? What are the things that we focus on? And so that was something that I think is a big part of our brain. If you go to our website, you can see what our values are. And then of course, what our vision and our purpose or the program

Abigail Vandiver 10:45

Yeah. Um, what do you think you could have done better in the process of changing I guess you already hit on it you would have started as North Mississippi but

Participant 4 10:58

yeah, that's what that's that's definitely when I look back on things I wish that we had started because changing name is really difficult. And, you know, for nonprofits, you know, we started you know, our RS name will always be custom Fayette County, but we're doing businesses, customer facilities and so it definitely gets difficult when it comes to like grant writing and asking for funding and that kind of stuff. So

Abigail Vandiver 11:22

um Did you face any pushback from anyone or any kind of challenge? Any confusion or negative emotion regarding this

um, see, trying to make sure I ask things that are like applicable

Participant 4 11:51

Yes. And we didn't see any revenue loss. I

Abigail Vandiver 11:56

know. Yeah. Well I figured everyone would be happy about it. If you could rate the success of your engagement efforts in communicating your rebrand internally or externally or just both from one to 10 What would you rate them

Participant 4 12:12

at the end just and that's just simply because for I think, when you're comparing a business to a nonprofit, I think when you're talking about a nonprofit standpoint, that if a nonprofit starts as a small program that is looking towards growth to be able to help more people, then it's always gonna be positive, positively perceived. And so I think that's where we came out. Is that a while you're grown to serve more kids across North Mississippi, so I think for us, it's it's always going to be a positive situation. And I can't say that for every nonprofit. I think that speaking on or speaking about cost specifically, because we're growing and expanding that's why I think it was positive for us.

Abigail Vandiver 13:02

If you were recommending to another nonprofit, or someone was asking you for advice, what would you recommend? Based on what you did? Like how could you give them advice for a rebrand or a name change?

Participant 4 13:14

Yeah, I would say I mean, I think logo change for nonprofits confuse people really easily if they do that. So I would always say, I mean, like, name change, you know, be able, whatever you do be able to tap back to your original like how it started originally. Because if you go into a whole logo, new to completely different name, people are gonna get confused. I was actually just reading an article about the the families first you know that was an issue. And then I was reading about how there was one organization that was called family first and then there was another one called families first and it can get confusing. You know, we struggle a lot. There's a program in Lake County, but it is church after school association. And so, you know, we knew that going into it, but obviously different logos and it's just, you know, it's C dot A dot s dot a. But it's been definitely something that we really have to mark it, and not just. Because people get us confused a lot. So it's been it's definitely been one of the bigger challenges there. There was a program like ours, they're about 30 plus years ago, and then they shut down and then the church after school program started. We don't do anything the same, but you know, cost is not a common program name or common anything and so making sure that people understand the difference between what we do and what they do has been definitely something that you know, I can't change it, but we just have to market it and you know, tell people what we do as opposed to what they do because they'd been there for a while now said

Abigail Vandiver 15:07

um I think that you pretty much gave me all the information you

Participant 4 15:14

like to get to it and you just have questions like that grace did the same thing she like would ask questions after she got ready to start writing and you're more than welcome to call or

Abigail Vandiver 15:23

you. I mean, you pretty much answered most of the questions I would ask in in your statements. Um, I think that's

Participant 5

Abigail Vandiver 0:00

So my email really what I'm interested in is like less the real like that rebrand itself and more of the like communication and how like kind of like you decided and then communication kind of coming out of it. So I'm just kind of as we start Could you please state your name and title?

Participant 5 0:19

My name is Deb

My name is Participant 5, and I am an Associate Dean and Professor in the

Abigail Vandiver 0:36

And then how long have you been in this current role in the

Participant 5 0:41

current role? A little less than a year.

Abigail Vandiver 0:45

Okay, I've had multiple Yeah. How long have you been almost as a whole

Participant 5 0:51

I got here in January 2009. So I guess 14.

Abigail Vandiver 0:57

Okay, um, just briefly describe kind of the rebrand that the has gone through including like what specific element changed or elements.

Participant 5 1:06

So and I'm assuming that you're asking the rebrand that occurred when we went from being the to just the . And so, as you know, from studying IMC your brand has to or you hope that your brand will reflect positive messaging, and that people will associate the name of your product or company or school with only good things or at least neutral things. And so, we, after many discussions with lots of different people decided that we were better positioned to not have a name attached to our School of personal name. But rather to just be the .

Abigail Vandiver 2:09

When did this is not going to read question was curiosity. When did it go from the school of ? Was that I mean, that would have been a long time ago.

Participant 5 2:17

Yeah. So when the school was founded in 2009. At that point, it was named . Okay. Okay. And of course, because what is it controversial?

Yeah, probably too strong a word but but what doesn't foster discussion these days but the the words new media or not Husa unit universally embraced by the faculty at that time? I actually was not part of the renaming because the decision on what to rename the school actually happened before I got here, but my understanding is that new media was a term that people thought would actually get outdated very soon, just ironically, new media. You know, the feeling is that, you know, how long can you be new media. So, at any rate, there was a faction that just one school of journalism, but I think there were people that thought was saying, and new media was more inclusive of where we made me happen.

Abigail Vandiver 3:30

That's interesting. Okay, um, okay, so what we know driving forces, what steps I guess specifically did you take when determining to take the name off and then to leave it as just the

Participant 5 3:49

I think that we realize that a name is very important, and we didn't want to when we decided to no longer have a name associated and personal name associated with the School of Journalism and new media. We didn't want to dive in and just come up with a new name. We wanted it to be a really thoughtful process. And, and I think that was smart. You know, I do believe that because we have a integrated marketing communications degree that we probably need to consider how to make our name, communicate more effectively that IMC is a part of our school. I don't know that people always think new media and then think IMC Right. So. You know, there, all kinds of things have been discussed the idea that maybe we should . But of course people are very passionate about journalism.

Abigail Vandiver 5:03

Not happening.

Participant 5 5:06

Some people think, you know, our name is already so long, let's just call it the . So it's there a lot of competing factors. And again, as you know, from the studies that you've done, I mean, it's . New media is already really long. It's very difficult to come up with an acronym. We try so to JNM or juror IMC, I mean, so, when it comes to branding, there's so many other factors. That you have to consider with the name. Plus, you know, ideally, you're not you don't have the exact same name as 10 other schools. So it's a really big big project to change the name and I think we need to be it needs to be a bigger priority before we actually make another change.

Abigail Vandiver 6:10

Yeah, um, I guess you touched on this a little bit. What were some challenges you faced, kind of throughout your the rebrand and taking the name off?

Participant 5 6:19

You know, I would say that just from a logistical standpoint, you may or may not be amazed at how many things had to be redone. envelopes, logos, you know, every web page had to be revised. And still today, everyone's want we'll get a random message from some and do you know that it shows ever No way. It was no small thing. To take it off the side of the building. And so just many, many things. I mean, we had purchase graduation gifts that had you know, the former name on it. I mean, it just, it was everywhere, which is was you know, we did a good job, Randy. I'm Brandon rebirth. You got to do it all over again.

Abigail Vandiver 7:18

Okay, and then how long? I guess this is kind of like what what do you think how long the entire process took?

Participant 5 7:25

So as I mentioned, you know, we're still kind of in it. In some respects, I would say at least a year and a half. Before there was enough you know, the, the changes weren't coming up every day.

Abigail Vandiver 7:48

Okay, and then at what point in the name change, did you start to communicate with like a broader group of stakeholders about the change?

Participant 5 7:59

So I this is my recollection. Oh, my recollection is we never did anything formal, that we never put out a news release saying, here's our new name. We never sent an email to students saying, you know, here's our new name. I think we just let it happen organically. Just communications that would come from school. Were just at that point.

Abigail Vandiver 8:31

I'm trying to remember. bounce around. I can't remember either. Okay, so did you do anything differently to engage with your internal stakeholders? I mean, I guess if you didn't do anything formal than maybe not, but did you do anything differently to engage with your internal stakeholders than your external stakeholders?

Participant 5 8:49

Yes, from the standpoint that we we solicited feedback from students, faculty, and staff on whether or not this was a necessary change, to some extent, external stakeholders, if you consider external to from our school being the university as a whole, they weighed in I don't really feel like we necessarily reached out to them but they definitely expressed their opinions to us. And we definitely listen to what was recommended and and, but ultimately, we felt like what our school is named should be a decision that people who are in the school may and so we had many meetings, I would say at least a dozen meetings where this this came up in discussion. Sometimes those meetings were very open and students were invited. Sometimes they were faculty meetings, where, you

know, technically state law says anybody can come to those but they tended to just have faculty and staff and

Abigail Vandiver 10:07
I'm cool.

Did you guys receive any pushback? Or were there I guess you said there were strong opinions for you know, certain things and kind of how did you how did you deal with it, I guess Yeah, manage.

Participant 5 10:29

So you know, we what I was saying is bottom line is because the the name change was prompted under difficult circumstances. I think more than anything our wish was to have a name. That would not be a negative. And you know, there were some people that wanted us to, to use another personal name for this for our school and we thought, you know, with our luck, we'll find out something terrible, but that hurt, you know, I mean, it was just, we wanted as much as anything as we wanted to, to frankly, return to normal return to, to what we care about most which is educating students, having faculty succeed, you know, making sure staff feel valued. I mean, all those kinds of things are way more important, I think, in the minds of most of the leadership team, than what name is on the outside. And so we, we listened when people provided other suggestions, but we didn't. We ultimately came down on what we felt was the least disruptive change to the brain

Abigail Vandiver 12:01

Okay, um if you could change anything about the way that you did, your rebranding, rebrand the process would you and if you would, what would it be?

Participant 5 12:23

You know, I 100% believe that things could always be done better. But I guess what I will say is that not not having the luxury of seeing, you know, doing a B testing and seeing which one works more effectively. I will say that, I don't think Well, let me ask you a question. So, our School of Accountancy, who has it named after

Abigail Vandiver 13:01

Patterson, his first name is,

Participant 5 13:03

well, you're an ambassador.

Abigail Vandiver 13:04

I am not the good man. I'm the good person to ask.

Participant 5 13:08

I would guess if I went and asked 10 People who aren't as plugged in

Abigail Vandiver 13:14
as you Yeah. Not a good example here.

Participant 5 13:16

What was the name? What's the south endzone? What's the South Gate of the pavilion? After? I don't know I mean, I don't think that that names in terms of whether there's a personal name or yeah, this is important as what's the what's, what name communicates most effectively, to what the school is about. And so, on the one hand, I think it did a good job of just saying we're not going to, you know, rush into a new name that that could lead to additional controversy. But if I had to do something, if I could wave a magic wand, I would have come up with a name that better integrated IMC that's interesting, because we're going to have to do that and so if you're going to rebrand wouldn't it be nice to only rebrand once? And we will have to rebrand or maybe we will but it could be helpful to us to rebrand to make IMC more front and center

Abigail Vandiver 14:33

if you could give any advice to somebody else looking to change their name, or I guess in your case would be more academic centered but if you could give advice to somebody, what would you tell them?

Participant 5 14:46

Be aware of how long it will take to actually execute it in all its many forms. And you know, be take the time that you need to make sure that you are getting as much feedback as possible, whether that's the focus groups or some other type of research because as my colleague Scott being used to say to me, IMC is everything and meaning, you know, it's what your trash cans look like to you know what your letterhead and logo are and so, because a name is such an essential part of the way that you brand yourself that you really want to think through like do I wish _____ wasn't so darn long? Yes, almost once a month. Oh my gosh, how are we going to get that on there in a way that looks good and you know what? What is going to be our social media handle? Possibly put all that on there. So, you know, think through all the applications of your brand, especially the name and do yourself as many favors as you can to make it the most functional name you can

Abigail Vandiver 16:13

have. Okay, I guess last question. Do you feel like overall your rebrand was successful?

Participant 5 16:21

Well, I guess, again, you never know if a different name had been used. What would happen, but we're kind of on track to have the largest school enrollment in our history next year. Our IMC program continues to thrive our journalism program is back growing again. You know, it apparently didn't hurt. Yes. That's yeah, I can for sure. But I can't say whether another choice might have had even more.

Appendix 3-A. QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWERS

What is your name and the name of the company that you work for?	What is your job title and how long have you been in that role?	Briefly describe the rebranding efforts your company has gone through, including what specific elements of your brand changed.	What were the biggest challenges that you faced throughout your rebranding process?	How did you engage your internal stakeholders (i.e. employees) in your rebranding efforts?	How did you engage your external stakeholders (i.e. customers) in your rebranding efforts?	If you were advising another company attempting to rebrand themselves, what advice would you give them?
Participant 6	I am the Associate Director for Marketing and Brand Strategy and I have been in this role for 4 years.	We have gone through a complete overhaul of the brand since 2019. We have changed everything from typefaces to how we talk about ourselves as an institution. To be specific: Typefaces Imagery Voice Website Social media Graphic design in general	The biggest challenges have been communicating the changes across campus and providing the tools for success to people outside Marketing and Communications. Training ourselves so we can then go and train others has proven to be a big challenge. And conveying that a brand is a lot more than just using the correct typefaces is difficult for folks that are not regularly involved in the industry.	We met with representatives from every department to give them an overview of the process. As the process kept moving, we regularly updated our stakeholders on relevant changes, and provided some of the information necessary to evolve certain aspects of their brand usage.	We took a similar approach to external stakeholders as we did with internals. However, when working with externals we did find that they are more prone to follow the rules of the brand because they are usually third-party vendors.	I would advise a company to take care of as many of the little things as possible. Make sure you build all your logos and distribute them beforehand. Develop a training plan that is recurring instead of hosting large-scale meetings where people tend to disengage. Reduce the amount of work people who are not involved in marketing have to accomplish for the brand to succeed.

Participant 7	<p>I am Manager of Oxford Retail location. I have been at this position for three years, and was a part-time employee at the store for about five years before that.</p>	<p>We are a t-shirt screen printing company-- used to be called -- located here in Oxford. In 2020, we merged with another company called (out of Fayetteville, AR) and combined our resources. We took on their name as they had a larger nationwide presence, while had been primarily focused in Mississippi and surrounding SEC schools.</p> <p>We did not change too much of the style and design of actual merchandise and apparel that we sell, however broadened it as the two companies did have very similar customer markets and design ideas.</p> <p>The big change was the name and logo as well as all accompanying paper/day to day office supplies (cardboard t-shirt boxes, shopping and shipping bags, information sheets, etc-- anything branding that we stamp our logo on!)</p>	<p>Really just getting the word out that our name had changed. People still knew where was, and since the fact that only the name on the door changed rather than anything inside, there was some confusions when their email receipts said from rather than</p> <p>We kept the same phone number and answered " when getting a call, and folks always immediately asked if this was .</p>	<p>We had great in-depth meetings about the new company and their history, got tours of all the facilities, and were gifted new logo merchandise for us to wear. Less uniforms but more just comfy merchandise.</p>	<p>We posted all over our social medias-- not just suddenly flipping the switch with no explanation but had an actual post explaining that we () were merging and becoming !</p> <p>The sales teams and those working directly with customers let them know well in advance and that our processes would remain almost exactly the same, and reassured them the high quality of products and customer service that they are used to would not be changing, and if so for only an improvement.</p>	<p>There are going to be bumps in the road no matter what, customers will be confused up front. I would advise to clearly say/post/promote the change by saying hey we were X but now we are Y in order to serve you better!</p>
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Participant 8	Attorney/Partner 22 years as an attorney and 15 years as a partner.	<p>We merged with a firm with offices in Jackson, MS and Memphis and felt the " " matched the growth and direction of the firm as we're growing into more of a regional firm.</p> <p>Other than our name, we changed our logo, email addresses, webpage, and various subscriptions and memberships to match the updated name.</p>	No one element was too difficult, but managing the multiple issues and making sure everything was coordinated proved more challenging than expected.	In the process of the merger we advised staff that we would be rebranding to reflect the growth and goals of the firm. Slowly we then introduced the names and logo, even submitted several of the final logo options to the staff to vote on favorites.	After all was in line, we announced the rebranding and merger via press release and social media.	Allow yourself plenty of time and plan well ahead of the time in which you want to announce.
Participant 9	Editorial Team member, 3 school years	<p>originally known as " " was This was the same name as another online retailer's website. The leadership team felt that in order to grow the brand and differentiate ourselves, we would have to move to a different name that was more anchored in Oxford and the University's culture. The " " is a nickname for Oxford, but it is not widely known. The renaming of "Square" allowed us to also use more graphic design elements involving the geometrical square shape.</p>	Although I was not on the leadership team at the time of the rebranding process, the team faced confusion as it was not widely known that " " was the same thing as	The team members were informed at our regular meetings.	The Instagram account was the main source of pushing " " content as opposed to " ". We were able to make social media graphics and have coordinated photoshoots.	I think you have to commit to the idea of the change. It requires analyzing your organization's culture and what they hope to accomplish.

Participant 10	Executive Director, a little less than 2 years	redid our logo in fall of 2021. We have also changed our mission statement and added a non-discriminate statement.	All efforts were voted on by the board. This causes issues with having a lot of opinions and trying to make sure everyone felt heard and the final product was something everyone agreed on			
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