

# Rebrand implementation guide:
# Top 10 signs your rebrand is on the path to success

by Patrick Heath and Heather Jones

For most marketing leaders, working with a branding agency to shape the strategic and creative direction of their brand is the highlight of their rebranding journey. This early stage tends to leave them brimming with enthusiasm and eager to launch their new brand to the world.

But brand change is not something you should jump into without developing a rigorous and thorough implementation plan. After all, bringing a new brand to life requires months — or even years — of sustained effort, and there's significant pressure to get it right. To achieve the market impact you're looking for, you'll need to be thoughtful and intentional as you complete the creative work and focus intently on implementation.

Your brand launch is the ideal time to pause, take stock of what you've accomplished so far, and make sure your rebrand is truly positioned for success. By looking for the following ten success markers (and addressing any that are missing), you can proceed with confidence that your rebrand is headed in the right direction.

## 1. Consistent C-suite support for the rebrand

Brand change doesn't happen in a marketing vacuum. It's a strategic decision designed to propel your organization forward. With this in mind, implementing a rebrand shouldn't be treated as though it's the job of the marketing team alone. It should be viewed and accepted as the organization-wide, high-level priority it is.

That's why it's so important for your CEO and other executive leaders to endorse your rebrand and communicate its value to employees at all levels. When team members understand the rationale behind your rebrand and the varied benefits you expect to see, they'll be more likely to support it themselves.

Of course, if you want messages about the importance of your rebrand to permeate your organizational culture, they should be delivered more than once. Asking the C-suite to share regular updates about your progress via the most engaging company-wide communications channels is one way to keep your rebrand top of mind.

## 2. Alignment around your rebrand's timeline, cost, and scope

Large-scale initiatives require everyone to row together toward a common goal. But reaching alignment can be a real challenge, especially in organizations that value a collaborative approach to decision-making.



**If you're still iterating and debating as your launch date approaches, your rebrand could stall out before it begins.**

There are valid reasons to invite multiple voices to weigh in on the direction your rebrand should take. And it's normal and healthy to debate questions like:

- How long should it take to roll out this rebrand? What are the trade-offs between going faster or slower?
- What's the best way to allocate limited budget dollars — and how much will this ultimately cost?
- How extensive should this brand change be?
- What resources will we need to achieve our desired result?

However, these conversations should take place early in the planning process, ideally alongside creative development. Eventually, you will need to make the necessary decisions to keep your rebrand moving forward. If you're still iterating, debating, and analyzing as your launch date approaches, there's a significant risk your rebrand will stall out before it begins.

### 3. Your rebrand implementation budget is approved, centralized, and fully funded

There are no two ways about it: Rebranding is expensive. And when it comes to securing the budget you need, your CFO and other executive colleagues won't give their stamp of approval lightly. To win their support, you'll need to:

- Take a complete inventory of your branded assets
- Conduct scenario planning to determine the best way to convert each type of asset in your rebrand's purview
- Develop accurate financial projections that take your implementation timeline and scope into account
- Factor in your organization's CapEx and OpEx policies to minimize the impact to your bottom line
- Build in contingency funds for instances where implementation doesn't go according to plan (e.g. vendor costs increase unexpectedly; branded asset prototypes don't meet desired brand guidelines and need to be redone)

If you're a large, decentralized organization, it's also wise to create a single, all-encompassing budget to fund your rebrand. Providing each location with adequate resources from the corporate office is the best way to ensure each one delivers the consistent, accurate result you expect.

### 4. You have the people and systems you'll need to roll out your rebrand

Rebranding is incredibly labor intensive. And if team members across your organization are already managing challenging workloads, they may not be able to easily absorb the additional responsibilities that come with a rebrand. To that end, you'll need to consider:

- Reprioritizing or rebalancing your employees' existing responsibilities to make room for rebrand-related tasks
- Supplementing your internal team's bandwidth by engaging the support of contractors, agencies, and/or vendors

You'll also need to invest in systems that allow your teams to track and report progress. Adequate tools and technologies are essential to support the sophisticated brand change your organization is looking for.

### 5. The project governance structure is clearly defined

A strong project governance structure is one that empowers people to contribute, make decisions, and operate autonomously within established guidelines. Your people need to understand their roles and responsibilities and feel accountable for their portion of the project plan. When they know what's expected of them, have adequate time to devote to the project, and know where to turn when they have questions or encounter obstacles, that's a positive indicator that your rebrand is on course.



**When your people know what's expected of them and where to direct their questions, that's a good sign your rebrand is on course.**

Selecting and training workgroup leads to spearhead your rebrand in each department, location, or business unit is a smart strategy to employ here. If at all possible, free up these leaders to focus entirely (or almost entirely) on keeping the rebrand moving forward in order to maintain and accelerate your project's momentum.

### 6. You've crafted detailed, prioritized rebrand implementation plans (with dependencies)

Determining the best way to convert all your branded assets will take up the lion's share of your rebrand

implementation plan. You'll need to decide when and how to transition items like:

- Signs
- Workwear and badges
- Fleet vehicles
- Documents and collateral
- Digital assets and third-party channels
- Products and packaging



**Smart prioritization allows you to focus your resources on converting the assets that will make the largest impact.**

All assets are not created equally. Smart prioritization allows you to focus your limited resources on converting the assets that will make the largest market impact.

For example:

- A healthcare organization might prioritize transitioning intake/billing forms, workwear, and ID badges to provide a cohesive patient experience
- A pharmaceutical company might choose to update highly regulated products and packaging before they transition signs at their physical locations
- A communications company might focus their efforts on updating their website, social media accounts, and third-party channels

It all depends on your organization and what you want your rebrand to accomplish. The earlier you can hammer these details out, the better — especially if you also need to factor dependencies into the equation.

For instance, if you're rebranding due to an M&A, you may not be able to transition anything until the legal department gives you the go-ahead. Likewise, updating your website may require support from IT, which can be difficult to obtain if they are also managing multiple organizational priorities.

### 7. Your rebrand is driving increased efficiency across your organization

Implementing a rebrand almost always uncovers opportunities to shore up weak processes, eliminate waste and redundancy, and streamline operations. To that end, increased efficiency is a telltale sign that your rebrand is on the right track.



**Maximizing the rebrand's full potential for efficiencies won't happen automatically.**

But although efficiency can be a by-product of rebranding, maximizing its full potential won't happen automatically. It's incumbent on you to think about your branded ecosystem holistically in order to identify additional opportunities for cost savings.

For example, say it's time to renovate or refresh one of your buildings. Converting that building's signage to your new brand before those renovations take place would be wasteful. Instead, it's a better use of resources to fold your rebrand into your existing renovation plans.

### 8. You've developed clear brand guidelines and asset specifications

Your audience needs to understand what your brand stands for and what they can expect to experience when they engage with your organization.

That means your employees, agency partners, and vendors all need to know what it takes to deliver your brand consistently.

One way to achieve this is to create a comprehensive brand asset book that lays out all the guidelines and specifications related to bringing your brand to life. At a minimum, be sure to develop:

- Clear brand guidelines that provide every possible use case for your brand and the right and wrong ways to use it. Be sure to spell out the visual elements (colors, shapes, and gradients) that collectively make up your logo as well as the voice, tone, and style guidelines that shape your messaging.

- Branded asset specifications for each asset class. These are the exact specs and guidelines vendors and internal resources use to create your branded assets in every category (e.g. sizes, measurements, dimensions, colors, materials, etc.)

It's practically impossible to overthink these guidelines. The more specific and detailed you can get, the more accurate and consistent your team and external partners will be.

### 9. You've created — and are following — a thoughtful communication plan

Whether you're planning to launch your rebrand with a "big bang" or roll it out gradually over time, you're undoubtedly hoping for a positive response from internal and external stakeholders. Good communication is critical to achieving the impact you're after.

Without solid communication and stakeholder engagement strategies, your audience might question the value of your rebrand or even reject it out of hand. (Case in point: The Gap's 2010 rebrand lasted a mere six days before the company walked it back.)



**If you see more warning signs than success indicators, take heart. It's never too late to seek help.**

When building your communication plan, consider questions like:

- Who is our audience? How should we segment them to ensure we communicate in a personal and effective way?
- How strong is our audience's connection to our legacy brand?
- What messages do they need to hear to help them embrace the new brand?
- Who is the best person to deliver that message — and when/how often should we send it?

It's important that your audience doesn't perceive your brand change as a sterile corporate decision. Instead, they need to understand why you're making this move and what it will mean for your brand identity and promise moving forward.

### 10. Employees are stepping up as ambassadors of your new brand

The last — and perhaps most encouraging — sign that your rebrand is on the path to success is that your employees have internalized its ethos and become true brand champions. They know what it stands for, understand its value, and demonstrate an authentic commitment to delivering its unique promise every day.

This level of engagement stems from in-depth training exercises that provide space for employees to ask questions of their leaders and peers.

For best results, look at brand training and employee engagement as an ongoing process — not a one-and-done endeavor.

### What do the signs say about your rebrand?

Assessing the state of your rebrand is a valuable exercise and it's gratifying to see positive signs that you're on the right track. But if you happen to see more warning signs than success indicators, take heart. It's never too late to bring in outside help.

No matter where you are on your journey, BrandActive can help you chart a course to your desired destination. Just reach out.

# Achieve more.
# Spend less.
# **Build a better brand.**

For more than two decades, BrandActive has partnered with Fortune 1000 companies and leading healthcare systems to optimize the implementation of rebranding programs of all sizes. We've been everywhere your brand lives and seen everything marketing touches across every area of your organization. So, we have unique insights into how to improve ROI.

Whether you're going through a one-time corporate rebrand or wanting to get the most out of the everyday management of your existing brand, we help you achieve more, spend less, and build a better brand.


720.446.5632

contact@brandactive.com

brandactive.com

**New York**
21 West 46th Street
New York, NY 10036

**Toronto**
400 University Avenue, Suite 2101
Toronto, ON M5G 1S5 Canada

**Colorado**
150 Old Laramie Trail E, Suite 230
Lafayette, CO 80026


BrandActive