

When is the right time to rebrand?

If you're reading this, the chances are you have an interest in branding. As a brand strategy, design and communications agency, we see branding as a tool capable of transforming every aspect of a business. Branding influences all the ways people experience and interact with your business.

In life, and in business, timing is everything. Doing the right thing at the right time can take us and our organisations to a new level. But putting off important decisions — or doing too little, too late — can hold us back. Time is always moving forward and what gets left behind becomes increasingly out-of-step with the needs of the moment.

Like everything else, brands age. The brand that was right when you started out may no longer align to the organisation you've become. Businesses evolve, grow, diversify and refocus. Markets change as well as customer expectations. The people you are selling to today may be very different from those of a few years ago, and the brand needs to keep up. Is your message and visual identity still relevant to where you are today? For many companies, it's not.

So when is the right time to refresh your brand?

You'll know your brand needs some work when the things you're saying, and the way you're saying them, no longer reflect the reasons your customers come to you. It begins with the message. But the way you present that message through design must do it justice. Does the appearance of your communication set you apart from your competitors? Does it feel authentic, exciting and engaging as possible to the people you want to do business with? If not, this is the time to do something about it!

It's usually the marketing team who are the first to know. However, people can grow attached to an old brand: "What's wrong with our logo anyway?" So it can be difficult to take an objective view, to look from the outside-in. Opportunities to maximise the impact of the brand may be missed, and the brand weakened. In the meantime, competitors may be stealing a march on you.

You may be aware that there is a problem, but with many businesses there's always a reason to push back, to wait and think of why it's not the right time, quoting what ifs, buts and maybes. If you're already thinking about the future, there will be a big overlap between your plans and your brand. That is an excellent moment to be moving it forward, making change visible through design and marketing communications.

Won't it mean changing everything, even the name?

Refreshing your brand doesn't always require a complete revamp. The key thing is what you're saying about yourselves. Is it aligned to your strategic goals? Is it consistent between your website, your printed collateral, and what your people are saying? And how does it look? Is it beginning to feel dated? Does it suggest a smaller, less established company than you are today? Does it have cut-through amidst all the noise of the marketplace? And does it reflect your personality and culture?

The extent to which it needs to be changed depends on how far the problem goes. Maybe the name itself is no longer right? Or maybe the name is fine, but your logo looks like a 1990s startup? Or maybe the name and logo are fine, and it's just the tone of voice, and look and feel that needs to be reinvigorated?

When is the right time to rebrand? *continued...*

Strong brands disrupt markets, unite employees, influence behaviours, sharpen a competitive edge, make a lasting impression and build brand value for future succession or sale. But weak brands just say: "here's a business that has lost its way."

Fortunately, many businesses do recognise the signs that their brand needs some TLC. These include awareness that:

- we're looking dated and negative perceptions are losing us business
- we're struggling to articulate who we are, what we do and why we're different
- prospects are choosing competitors over us
- our communications aren't joined up, there's no consistency and little impact there
- our vision, values and purpose are not clear
- our tone of voice doesn't match our personality
- the way we look feels similar to our competitors.

So, what does it take to address these issues?

Firstly, there's recognition — the realisation that something has to change.

Secondly, there must be a desire to make it happen. And it must come from the top, from the leadership team, because they are the ones who will need to drive change (although it's also important that employees feel involved and can contribute to the process).

Thirdly, it has to be possible to find a budget, otherwise it's not going to happen.

There are also some major business events which should always trigger a brand review, even if you weren't thinking of rebranding:

- A merger, acquisition or change of business structure
- The handover from one generation to another
- A major competitor adopting a similar identity or colour palette
- The launch of a new product
- Starting-up a new business or division
- A major overhaul of a customer-facing aspect of the business, such as new premises, new systems or even a new website
- The legal requirement to change a name, e.g. a franchise licence running out
- Competitors raising their game and making you look dated or unprofessional
- A significant anniversary.

What do you do next, if you realise you need to refresh your brand?

Talk to a brand agency. Talk to us. Brand is what we do. We're here to help our clients make changes which will take their businesses forward.

We're very experienced and tuned-in to assessing a brand's strengths and weaknesses. Like architects, we're adept at judging the solidity of the structure as well as whether the brand is an attractive place to go. Does it serve its purpose? Is it projecting a sense of energy? We'll take an in-depth look at your brand and advise whether you need a refurbishment, extension or rebuild.

But don't leave it too late. If your brand's roof is leaking, it might only need a quick fix. But if it's been leaking for some time, it could now be time to make sure it's fit for purpose and going to last for years to come. Timing is everything... here are some real life stories:

When is the right time to rebrand? *continued...*



*"After 16 years and following some internal soul searching we came to the realisation that **our brand no longer represented what we do as a business or, more importantly, how we wanted to be perceived.** We knew where we wanted to play in our market but we were **struggling with a consistent and coherent way to visualise and articulate it.** VGROUP showed us the way and with fantastic results! Our **positioning and differentiators are now clear**, which has **helped our internal engagement as much as our client acquisition.** Best of all **we look more professional, modern and have a brand that befits our future aspirations.**"*

TCC: [view case study](#)



*"We feel that having a slick and coherent brand is **essential to the future** of Groundsure. We had **not revisited our brand since 8 years ago**, we needed to **clarify the brand hierarchy and story for our customers.** My objective with the brand review was to **understand and define our brand essence** as well as **develop and enhance our visual identity.** VGROUP worked with us seamlessly and effectively as an extended part of our Team from project start to finish. The brand book they have produced has been **amazingly well received by the staff and stakeholders.** The work they have done for us makes the marketing Team's job easier and delivery better. Thank you VGROUP – I would recommend you to anyone."*

Groundsure: [view case study](#)



*"When we were looking for a partner to help us with our company rebrand I was **impressed with the methodology and process** that VGROUP proposed. They helped us keep all our stakeholders involved and **delivered a brand that truly reflects our mission and our values.** I would strongly recommend them. I have been receiving lots of praise and appreciation of our new brand too, as everyone seems to be a fan of the most immediate part of our new communications – the colours, logo and the strap line **'Copyright. Made Simple.'** Hopefully we can translate that into **creating the right impressions** right across our business."*

Copyright Licensing Agency: [view case study](#)



*"McLarens and Airclaims are **two strong and established global brands** in their own right and it was always going to be a challenge to **smoothly integrate the two with a new visual identity and common set of brand values.** By going back to basics and gaining an understanding of both businesses, and with the added pressure of **a very tight deadline, VGROUP created a fresh, modern look** that has been received positively and will help **support the growth of the company well into the future.**"*

McLarens: [view case study](#)

If you would like to talk about your brand, please contact Richard at hello@vgroup.com