

5 signs you may be ready for a rebrand

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From Absa to the SABC and this week, [John Deere SSA](#)'s rebranding - we often see the need for and impact of established brands choosing to differentiate themselves with a new brand name, visual identity, positioning and vision. Whether it's to escape the past, or to catapult a brand into the future, creating a corporate image that attracts and connects with your customer, is key. But how do you know whether you need a rebrand?



Gail Macleod, CEO of local and global branding and packaging design agency of over 23 years, Stratcom Branding, explains, "Africa is unique and very often global companies moving into South Africa will fall flat when it comes to customer recognition and market share."

"The same goes for South African companies trying to launch into Africa and beyond. A 'one-size-fits-all' strategy is one of the reasons a brand may fail in South Africa and why it may be necessary to approach a local expert to assist with a rebrand."



Gail Macleod

If brands are tone-deaf to the nuances of local and global culture, no matter how popular they are elsewhere, their efforts may fail. That is why a rebrand may be suitable in certain instances:

1. Following a crisis

Whether you are at fault or not, a rebrand may help to neutralise the negative sentiment towards your brand. BUT - it must be followed up with authentic and transparent measures to set any wrongs right.

In this sense, a rebrand will very much be focused on improving the trust factor.

Gail says of their work with Enterprise, "There are not many strategists and creative brand builders that are faced with the challenge of rebuilding a brand image. We were one of very few teams who were willing to take it on after such an emotionally and physically trying period."

"The team were breaking relatively new ground. Together with the Enterprise brand team, the packaging cues were built around the importance of assuring consumers of the many initiatives in place to improve food safety. The new vision and drive from the brand strongly reflects their 7-step quality check process," Gail adds.

The most important principle is transparency and making sure that as a brand you do what you say you are doing, or are going to do. Be honest about any share you have in the problem. Apologise sincerely and if you were at fault, fix it.

2. New technology in your industry

As new technology in packaging or branding enters your market you may have no choice but to follow suit. In this case and particularly if vast changes are required in your packaging, keep your brand identity similar or the same so as to best help your customers to recognise it on-shelf.

There are times when new technology necessitates logo changes. Macleod says, "We recently worked with an established national brand who had to rebrand due to their old logo not fitting properly on social media channels."



3. Hot abroad, but cold at home

A brand that may be popular overseas could leave local customers cold due to various factors. Local brands that look similar to the international brand could create confusion; colour palettes that are not popular locally could put off new buyers or brands out of touch with local cultures and tastes can result in intense dislike.

Though big global brands may not be able to completely rebrand, there are subtle changes to the brand identity that can be made to help it thrive locally.

4. It's just old

There is vintage (which is a branding and packing trend by the way), and then there is just plain old. Although Gail advises against a complete rebrand for a time-trusted product and rather a phased approach to rebranding, again subtle changes can bridge the gap between old and new and gain access to a whole new segment of the population.



5. Moving into a new era, or offering completely different products

Companies like Verizon Media (previously Oath Inc) who formed after merging Yahoo and AOL; or Samsung, who through its history has manufactured everything from appliances, to shipping, to chemicals, may go through many stages of rebranding.

If we use the example of Samsung appliances versus mobile phones, their branding which may be appealing to someone choosing a new washing machine, may do nothing to convince a young professional looking to purchase a new mobile phone. In this case, a carefully researched rebrand could be necessary.

In other cases, the current brand identity may create trust and will encourage consumers to purchase the new product type and should be kept the same.

If you are not sure whether you need a rebrand, find a partner that applies a strategic process to branding and packaging design and who has a local and global footprint.

Gail concludes, “Once our research is complete and we’ve identified whether a rebrand is needed it takes more than just designing a new logo. We take clients through a thorough process of clarifying their brand purpose, positioning and identity and develop a new or enhanced communication strategy and packaging architecture.”

About Stratcom Branding:

Known for providing commercially successful solutions for African, American, Asian & European brands, Stratcom

Branding design agency offers smart, seamless, professional problem solving to a brand, bringing functionally relevant, emotionally engaging, technically finessed packaging to local and international markets.

A careful balance between beautiful design and absolute functionality, have always been the hallmark of their philosophy. After two decades in the business, they have expanded into a global alliance that gives clients on a local level a distinct advantage. GLBA (Global Local Branding Alliance] means local outputs are reinforced with international inputs.

With over 350 global packaging innovations, designers and engineers, Stratcom Branding aims to build deeper connections through understanding and driving business branding which includes Business to Business, Business to Customer.

Their extensive Packaging, Corporate Identity and Packaging Digital competencies include; Consulting, Investigation, Strategy, Creation, Structure and Execution.

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