

Is it time for your brand to evolve?

 By [Jessica Edgson](#)

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While some brands choose to stay the same for decades, others evolve every few months. In some cases, it's a good thing and in others, not so much.

For example, Axe has evolved from a brand that targets sexist “bro” stereotypes and demeans woman to a brand that’s, well, not gross and challenges the very toxic masculinity it once championed. And that was a celebrated move. However, evolving a brand isn’t always a success, as evidenced by Coca-Cola getting rid of Coke Zero and replacing it with Coca-Cola Zero Sugar. Fans of the sugar-free cool drink are not impressed. Which only goes to show that some brands need to change and others should probably stick to what they’re doing.

So, how do you know whether your brand should evolve or remain the same? Should you pivot your marketing strategy or stick to business as usual? Should you try convince consumers to see you in a new light or should you stick with the same game plan you’ve had for years? The answer to those questions all depend on the following.

How has the world changed since your brand last changed?

The world is constantly changing. Sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. But time never stops moving, just like your consumer’s needs, views and attitudes. What your target market was into 20 years ago is going to very different to what they want today. They may be more conscious of the environment, more aware of societal issues, more “woke.” Or they may be the same people, just 20 years older.

Think about sugar. Twenty years ago, sugary foods and drinks weren’t thought to be that much of a problem, with the exception of dentists of course. Sure, people knew sugar wasn’t great for them, but they liked it and didn’t see the problem with indulging a little too much every so often. Now, there’s a whole movement that supports a completely sugar-free lifestyle. People are aware of the dangers and refusing to consume it. And the numbers are growing. So, if you sell a product that’s high in sugar, you should consider evolving your brand and your recipe. However, if you already have a sugar-free option with a wide fanbase, maybe it’s not a good idea.



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Another example: stereotypes. They’re over. They upset people. No, not the Trump supporters who purposefully elected someone who thrives on outdated and harmful stereotypes. Not the people who believe “alternative facts” and honestly think

climate change is a myth. Instead, stereotypes upset those who write well-thought out think pieces, speak out on social media to their thousands of followers and are willing to stand up for what they believe in with their wallets. So, if your brand is marketed towards the latter, steer clear of stereotypes, no matter how harmless they may seem to you.

Is your target market happy? More importantly, is your target market growing?

If your target market is happy and growing steadily, why would you try to fix something that isn't broken? If your business is thriving, that means your brand is thriving. People like your brand. People are brand-conscious and don't buy items from brands they find offensive, old-fashioned, outdated or irrelevant.

However, if your sales have stagnated, you may want to consider making a change, whether it's bringing out a new product that feeds new needs or doing a 180 with your marketing strategy. Steady sales are okay, but they aren't great. And if your sales are dwindling, that means people probably either don't like your brand or your competitors are simply making a better product. Which means you need to up your game and evolve with the times.

Is your brand simply average?

These days, there's no place for average when it comes to brands. You need to be something special if you want people to buy what you're selling. Unless you're the only brand selling your product or service (which is highly unlikely), you should strive to be better than average. Even better, strive to be iconic. Strive to be a brand that's bold and sticks with people. A brand that gets shared on social media for making a positive impact and taking a stance that consumers appreciate, like Reebok's recent viral tweet in reaction to comments Trump made to Brigitte Macron, the wife of the French president. While the tweet wasn't trying to sell shoes and sports gear, it definitely had people talking about the brand.

“ In case you were wondering when it IS appropriate to say, "You're in such good shape...beautiful,"... THIS:

pic.twitter.com/Z1cnnRD8Ut— Reebok (@Reebok) [July 14, 2017](#) ”

However, if your brand is already iconic, like say, Coca-Cola, you don't need to change your strategy (or your products) because you're already clearly doing something right. If you're on the right track, don't switch trains.

All brands eventually need to evolve as the world changes, but to different degrees and at different paces. It all depends on where your brand is currently at.

ABOUT JESSICA EDGSON

Jes Edgson is a freelance writer and editor with roots in the marketing industry. Originally from Cape Town, she's spent the past few months enjoying the fresh air in the tiny town of Darling. She's always up for a cup of coffee, a chat and a laugh. Opinions shared here are her own.

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