FEB 14

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Financial institutions' guide to rebranding

Article

The strategy: There are many reasons financial institutions (FIs) rebrand, according to Adrenaline Chief Experience Officer Juliet D'Ambrosio in our exclusive interview. These include:

- Mergers and acquisitions, such as **Arrow Bank National Association***
- Geographical expansions, or expansions beyond an FI's originally intended segment—like was the case with **Sunward***
- Shifts in business focus, such as in **Flagstar Financial's*** **case**

- Efforts to keep up with younger generations' preferences

**Note that examples provided are not clients of Adrenaline.*

According to the brand experience company's recent survey, 83% of FIs report at least a "moderate increase" in overall business growth following a rebrand. Growth is important, but trust even more so. **And there's a way to approach rebrands so they don't impact customer trust**, per D'Ambrosio.

First steps: A rebrand should always maintain the legacy FI's original DNA. That means everything that helped an FI attract and retain customers would remain, and those customers should still see that DNA in the rebrand.

Secondly, change should never be a surprise. While 5% to 8% of customers say they'll generally oppose efforts to rebrand, according to D'Ambrosio, but if the change and communication around it are managed well, then it will typically lead to only 1% attrition—or even less.

What that communication entails: FIs must communicate rebrands early on with employees. That's because a brand starts with an organization's values—and employees are the ambassadors for those values.

And when communicating with customers, FIs must address why the rebrand is happening and how it will lead to better products or services (i.e., what customers will get out of the change). Equally important, FIs must communicate to customers what won't change—such as the products they know and love, their cards, logins, and the friendly faces they're used to seeing at branch locations.

And it's not just about telling customers that change is coming—FIs must seek initial buy-in by testing the changes. Then, D'Ambrosio recommends, FIs should reinforce a smooth transition with rebrand-related marketing at least 18 months post-launch.

How to maintain consistency across all channels: There are many touchpoints where FIs can ensure consistency following a rebrand, such as physical branches, the website or app, and all levels of customer service. Brand guidelines that employees can follow at every turn are a great way to maintain that consistency.

Our take: A rebrand isn't just about aesthetics—it's an opportunity to deepen customer engagement. Banks can use the transition period to reconnect with customers through personalized outreach, exclusive promotions, or enhanced digital experiences that reinforce the brand's evolving identity while maintaining trust.