


# Rebrand lessons from Jell-O and its agency partner

Article



A rebrand can be intensive, but guiding principles like establishing clear goals and metrics from the start will help teams measure success. Gathering customer feedback is another essential step to managing a rebrand.

Here are four keys to making your rebrand a success.



## 1. Define rebrand goals and objectives

A rebrand can be as simple as a logo refresh or as in-depth as taking on a new identity.

“When a company is thinking about a rebrand, you have to understand why you're doing it,” said Erinn Steffen, senior vice president, insight at Mower Agency. “Is this a strategic shift in your core offerings? Are you trying to differentiate from your competitors? Sometimes it's just about modernizing or refreshing. All of that affects how you think about it.”

No matter their size, brands need to set clear goals, metrics, and milestones.

“Set it up ahead of time,” said Steffen. “Here's our success plan, and here are the metrics and the milestones that we're planning to hit over the next six, 12, 18 months, and here's how we'll measure and report against them.”

## 2. Understand what's core to the brand and what needs updating

Brand agency BrandOpus worked with Jell-O on its rebrand last year, helping the 127-year-old company update its logo, visual identity, and brand positioning. As part of its research, BrandOpus tracked down pictures and historical brand information from a retired Jell-O museum curator.

“What became clear is that Jell-O has always had a big red logo,” said Alice-Lara Waterman, managing director, BrandOpus US. “So we knew we would have to retain that.”

However, BrandOpus found other aspects of Jell-O's branding to leave behind.

“In the past, a lot of Jell-O's marketing tapped into diet culture,” said Waterman, citing packaging that touted the product's calorie count or ingredients that were removed. “It's a narrative that now is very outdated. Now, it's less about having food with everything removed from it and more about balance.”

## 3. Get consumer feedback

“You don't want to just be feeding off of an echo chamber of what people within your organization think [about your brand],” said Steffen. “You need to ask customers about their current awareness and perceptions of your brand as well as your competitors.”

Soliciting customer feedback unlocked a key learning for BrandOpus during the Jell-O rebrand process, according to Waterman.

“Whenever we talked to someone about Jell-O, everyone talked about a memory that they had [with it]. Everyone thinks of Jell-O as a joyful, fun thing,” she said.

This inspired BrandOpus to focus on embracing fun and wonder in Jell-O’s story.

“Rather than showing a bowl of strawberry gelatin, we said, ‘let’s create these wobbly, weird gelatin fruits, like a strawberry out of gelatin,’” said Waterman. “And for the pudding, let’s create these like hyper-real dollops that jiggle and move.”

Brands should gather consumer feedback throughout the rebrand process, especially in environments as close to “reality” as possible, according to Waterman. For example, many brands use fake supermarket setups to see how consumers react to new brands or products.

#### 4. Trust the process

While it can be difficult to hand over the creative reins and embrace change, brands working with agencies need to go into it with an open mind.

“[With Jell-O,] we had a client team who were really engaged and really excited,” said Waterman. “Everyone bought in on wanting change. And when that energy is there at the start of a project, it makes a huge difference.”

Even with everyone on board, a successful rebrand doesn’t happen overnight—it can take months to see results, said Steffen.

“Brands will be in market [with the rebrand] for three months and say they aren’t seeing any results yet,” she said. “And they’ll want to change their creative or their tagline. But you have to give it time. You have to have courage to give it a chance to actually stick.”

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