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## Brand Repositioning: When Does Your Business Need It?

Brand repositioning is all about changing the status of your brand by modifying its appeal to customers. However, determining when your brand needs to be repositioned is not always crystal clear. In fact, oftentimes the way companies determine when to reposition is akin to how different people approach shopping.

Case on point: On the continuum, there are two types of shoppers—those who thrive on trends and others who could care less. The trend obsessed head straight to the mall for a fashionable wardrobe update anytime they notice a shift in styles. Their point of view—if it's new I need it. On the other end of the spectrum are the laggards, those who neglect to notice changing trends and are still wearing jeans from the 1990s. Their point of view—if it's not worn out what's the point of updating?

When it comes to deciding when to reposition a brand, many businesses vacillate in a state of flux between extremes like the shoppers because they are uncertain about what constitutes a reason to reposition. Some change their brand positioning too often in reaction to changing market trends. This leaves buyers confused about who the company really is. Still others don't update their look, feel or messaging for 10 or more years, falling out of step with buyer wants and needs. Clearly, neither extreme is right. So how can a business decide when its time to reposition its brand?

### Six Reasons to Reposition

Even though repositioning done well takes some time and effort, it's critical to realign your brand position when your business is facing any of these situations:

- Competitors have usurped your value proposition: This dilutes the effectiveness of your positioning causing market reaction to your primary brand benefit to shift. When competitors

start delivering a similar message to yours the positioning benefit morphs into a cost-of-entry benefit, instead of one that is uniquely your own.

- Your brand position has become confusing: This can happen overtime to a brand, especially as new messages

### Executive Insights



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are added onto the company story. Alternatively, perhaps your brand position was never clear. Regardless of the reason, when buyers are confused about your primary brand benefit its time to reposition.

- Your company has a new, highly proprietary competitive advantage: These are exciting times and often include new patent-pending technology or a unique offering that competitors can't easily duplicate. If the brand isn't repositioned to capitalize on the new competitive advantage your marketing won't be able to leverage the benefits.

- There is a change in the company's strategic direction: Any tectonic shift such as a new line of business, an acquisition or expansion into a new market will render current positioning out of date. Strategic changes require a revisit of brand positioning so that your customers can clearly understand what this change means to them.

- A new competitor arrives and changes the game: Change is inevitable and competitors keep every business on their toes. When a new one enters your industry and steals buyers with a superior value proposition its time to rethink your brand position to ensure that it's still relevant to your market.

- There is a significant change in corporate culture: When a new CEO joins, oftentimes the personality of company shifts. With events that influence the culture, it's worthwhile to revisit your brand personality, at minimum, to make sure that it still matches the culture.

Brand repositioning doesn't start with a new design, logo or name. It starts by drawing on deep customer insights. Repositioning requires an intensely disciplined focus to realign the brand promise with unmet customer needs, in a way that is better than the competition is doing. When done well the payoff can be great. Repositioning done at the right time and in the right way is often the impetus that spurs a turnaround that leads to a company's continued success.

This column is written by Cheryl Isen, founder of Isen & Company, a strategic marketing and public relations firm that helps companies increase visibility and brand awareness. Contact Cheryl at (425) 222-0779, Cheryl@IsenandCo.com. Visit IsenandCo.com to learn more.