

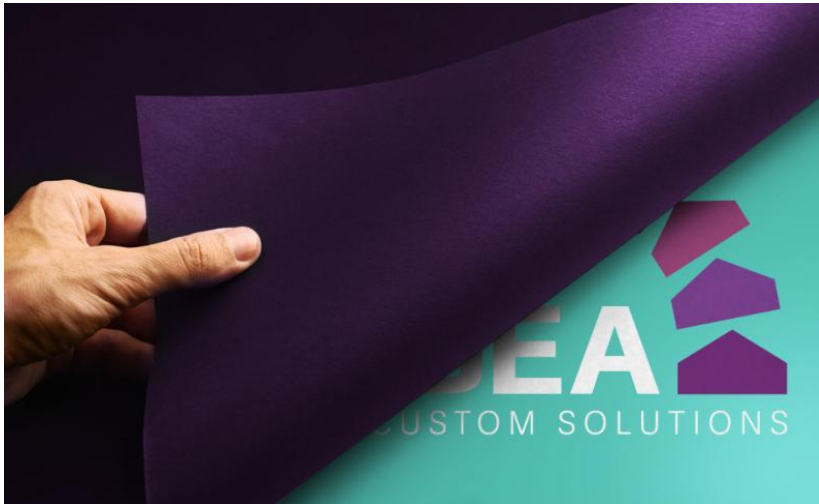
DESIGN EXPRESS

The graphic services newsletter for promotional products pros



May 2017

THE PRACTICE OF THE REBRAND IS HERE TO STAY



If you keep a close eye on marketing, you know that rebranding has been a prominent strategy over the last two years. From all the evidence we've seen, rebranding is not just a recent trend. Likewise, with so many different types of businesses retooling their marketing strategies, it's pretty clear also that this approach is not going away.

Rebrand to Reboot?

During the economic crisis of 2008, several major companies, particularly in the banking and financial sector, took a beating. Longtime players **Lehman Brothers** and **Bear Stearns** hurt their brands as well as those of firms with which they did business. They also wrecked client investment portfolios and eventually ceased to exist altogether. During the same time period, the insurance giant AIG lost billions too. **AIG ended up slyly renaming part of its operation**, while mega soccer club **Manchester United** — who had signed onto a long-term deal to wear the AIG logo on their game shirts, got stuck wearing the damaged brand's logo for the following year.

Few have written about it specifically, but 2008's downturn and the global economy's subsequent return may have — over the last several years — fueled a marketing boom and rallied people's taste for rebranding. Last year alone, companies across the varied industries such as beverages, sports, social media and heavy industry **reworked design and marketing strategies to reach new customers**.

Certainly some of the biggest rebrands have been necessitated by **mergers and acquisitions, with Kraft Heinz being one of the most notable**. Part of the mega-merger, odd as it may be, saw Kraft Heinz strive to keep

QUICK NEWSLETTER SURVEY

Would you recommend this newsletter?

Nope ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☒ 5 For sure

UPCOMING EVENTS

ASI Show!

Chicago, IL

July 12-13

Exhibiting: Booth #1137

Embroidery Mart

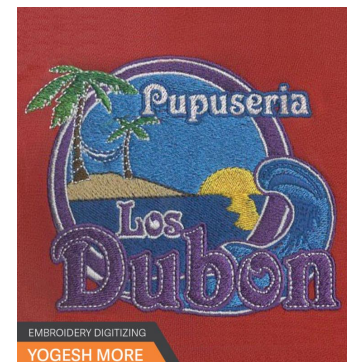
Nashville, TN

August 4-5

Attending

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TEAM

Every month, we celebrate the designers whose work scores the highest impressions on Instagram. This time, **Yogesh More** won for embroidery digitizing and **Nisha Awhad** won for vector artwork. Keep up the great work, team!



the reputations of major food products like **Kraft Mac and Cheese** **completely unaffected** in terms of customer perceptions (despite recipe changes). Meanwhile, digital outfits **Uber, Instagram, Zocdoc and Grubhub** **all got people talking about their rebrands** at a much louder volume.

Big Brands, Little Brands

In 2016 alone, both major corporate brands as well as non-profit institutions in the **arts, healthcare and education** **launched large-scale efforts to reposition their companies** or what it is that they do for their customers. Results weren't just about new logos or slicker taglines.

Firms like drug store retailer CVS recast their in-store health services as CVS Health. While letting their customers know that CVS stores aren't just for picking up aspirin or shampoo. They aim to become a better-known provider of non-hospital outpatient health services.

Meanwhile, British company Jaguar Land Rover ramped up their sales efforts on a number of new vehicles, showing how important marketing collateral, technical documentation and sales literature is. In their **2016 branding**, **the automaker fine-tuned the details of everything** from crisp fonts and brand marks to logo placement.

But the momentum of the rebrand isn't limited to the business world. Cities and small towns, **states and counties**, tourist and business commerce groups and **even libraries have rebranded**. Their aim is to garner the same kind of brand recognition with their own target audiences that big companies achieve with theirs. Even entire countries have sought to rebrand, mainly to reel in tourists. Besides the usual hotspots of Mexico and the Caribbean, countries including **Paraguay** and **the Philippines have launched new efforts to reach travelers**.

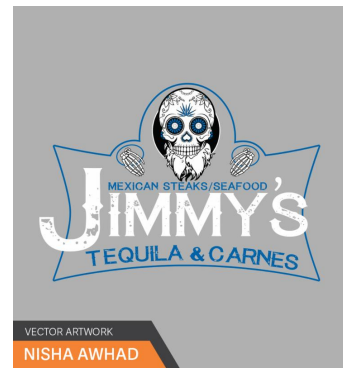
Let's keep in mind, however, that it's not just a new product or a need to build or restore a reputation that makes organizations think about rebranding. Nor does it require a merger of companies, or a change in ownership and company direction.

Take Hollandia Produce (a lettuce grower based in Carpinteria, California), which has been in business since 1970. In order to better tout their lines of fresh lettuce products in a growing market, they decided to go with a "modern, natural look" and **rename their brand as Pete's Living Greens**. The firm's head hints that their rebrand comes too, with a more personal touch.

"After much time spent listening to our consumers ... we came to the conclusion that our mission and motivation could be better displayed with an easily recognizable name," said CEO John Cochran, "While our commitment to quality and providing customers with the freshest, most flavorful greens possible will remain the same, we are excited to communicate our message with a new look."

What to Do with Rebrands

One of the best parts about rebrands is that it gives companies the ability to reach out to customers in a more deliberate way. Whether you want to **shape a new identity for your company** or to help your customers place their brands in every one of their clients' hands, **Idea Custom Solutions** can help. If you are a promotional products distributor that works with small and medium-sized businesses, make sure to talk to us about our



Great job, team! Check out new designs every day on Instagram ([idea_custom](#))!

NOTABLE QUOTES



"There are no secrets to success. It is the **result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure.**"

— Colin Powell



"**Every day brings new choices.**"

— Martha Beck

Custom Creative services so that we can help you better serve your customers and, in turn, win new ones.

MARKETING TO MILLENNIALS = SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES

Did you know that millennials constitute the largest living generation? Bet you never thought of them that way — as a bigger cohort than even the Baby Boom generation. Perhaps now, no matter what line of business you are in, you should think of them as that: more influential as a subset of society than other groups and especially as consumers.

More than Just “on Fleek”

It's true of any group or subculture. They have their own preferences, buzzwords and slang and values. They also have a unique perspective of what to buy, what to own, how to spend their time and resources. But courting millennial consumers to become your loyal and long-term customers requires more than a hip catchphrase or a trendy product offering.

In “27 Expert Tips for Marketing to Millennials” *Inc.* magazine contributor Christina DesMarais talks about social media and engagement. Some of the first key tasks at hand for any business, writes DesMarais can include some of the following:

- Optimize for social media
- Make your business Instagram-friendly
- Respond right away to emails, tweets and Facebook messages
- Make your campaigns adaptable

It might sound for a minute like it's all about the technology. Or that only hyper-social mega brands like the Shake Shacks and Coca-Colas of the world have a chance to compete and really impact their bottom line by courting millennial consumers. Not so.

First off, don't assume you know enough about this generation by what you've heard or read. Sure, they are environmentally-focused and earth-conscious, but millennials love SUVs as much as the Toyota Prius. They are changing the location of much of America's business activity, growing smaller cities like Austin, Texas and Portland, Oregon into influential hubs that rival New York City in certain industries.

Also, they're not just hipsters. Authenticity is more important than what's trending. They make excellent CEOs too.

Certainly it is important to have an understanding of the platforms millennials are using. But you need not be an expert. Just by having an active social presence on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat or whatever platform works for your business, you are in the game with this audience.

DesMarais also dishes up some old world wisdom and a common sense approach to customer building. She also writes that any business hoping to gain millennial customers for the long-haul must also do these things:

- Focus on word-of-mouth
- Meet them in person



“Repetition makes reputation and reputation makes customers.”

— Elizabeth Arden



“I'm still experimenting.”

— Stevie Wonder



“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”

— Winston Churchill



“Pessimism never won any battle.”

— Dwight D. Eisenhower

- Be transparent
- Sell not your products but your purpose

What seems to be true of any customer of any age or income level seems to be most true of millennial consumers. It's simply magnified by the emergence of social media, smartphones and other technologies. Better yet, technology itself is a must-have in huge quantities for any millennial.

Marketing the Brand and Message

We at Idea Custom Solutions are not sociologists or generation experts, but we're as excited to learn about and adapt to the preferences and tastes of millennial consumers and business owners as we are curious about what's next. **Our expertise is in enabling our clients to aid small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) in promoting their brands**, including to these young but very important customers.

So it was very encouraging that the Advertising Specialty Institute (ASI) recently considered the topic of **marketing to — and earning the trust of — millennial consumers**. In discussing the subject on their website last summer, they put it very simply:

"Millennials now make up the largest generational block in the U.S. and hold about \$1.3 trillion in annual buying power. By 2020, they'll comprise 50 percent of the U.S. workforce. Increasingly, studies show they also hold more influence on B2B purchases. Simply put, ignoring the sales opportunities millennials afford is a very bad idea."

In addition to the prevailing wisdom about keeping up with trends and tech, ASI echoed DesMarais's sentiments about delivering on promises and coming across as authentic. Moreover, ASI writes that providing something of value for free is a great way to start.

"Offering something at no cost to millennial decision-makers — even something intangible — will go a long way toward building trust ... Whether it's advice or insight, or something you can do that is of value but doesn't cost them anything, that's what you're really trying to accomplish in order to start the relationship."

To better illustrate **their most important findings about millennials**, ASI also published an excellent infographic.

When it comes to promotional products, it's clear that SMBs and our partners (the businesses that serve SMBs) are in luck. According to ASI, millennials love outerwear, use desk items about as much as their tablets or smartphones and often store data on USB drives.

That said, ASI also points out that millennials may still be a little rebellious. They're not big users of the classic desk calendars. And when it rains, they take their chances. Only 10 percent of millennials are likely to have a branded umbrella handy!

QUIRKY (AND EFFECTIVE) NEW IDEA: PET PROMOS

You probably hadn't ever thought about reaching customers through their pets — unless you are a pet lover! Then again it's probably very easy to dismiss what a big market pets are.



"No amount of skillful invention can replace the **essential element of imagination.**"

— Edward Hopper



"Don't let anyone tell you that you have to be a certain way. **Be unique. Be what you feel.**"

— Melissa Etheridge

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Shoaib Shaikh

Unit Production Specialist, Order Entry

Shoaib originally joined Idea Custom Solutions in 2013 as a production associate. He was part of an order entry team which is dedicated to a specific supplier client. Since then, he has been promoted and now serves as a mentor to other employees.

According to one recent report, **two thirds of consumers globally owned a pet in 2016**, up from 60 percent in 2014, while another highlights that **pet spending has grown 60 percent since 2006**. And, while **the pet food market alone is forecast to be a \$30 billion market** in the next five years, pet owners are ponying up plenty of money for toys to entertain their pets.

As such, the Advertising Specialty Institute (ASI) suggest that everyone in the business "think outside the crate" and **pitch pet-related promotional products**. Among the choices are traditional pet items like dog sweaters and leashes, as well as new takes on old items, like collapsible food bowls, safety lights and even pet care kits and gift bags.

Whether you're talking to businesses that directly serve pet owners, or ones that just want to reach them, pet promos are a fun and inventive way for your customers to cultivate new business. Turn to Idea Custom Solutions for **fast, high-quality vector artwork** so your customers' brands shine!

EMBROIDERY EVERYWHERE

Last fall a columnist for *Parade*, the popular magazine insert that graces weekly newspapers nationwide, said something we thought was funny. The author said embroidery "isn't just for grannies anymore".

Elaborating further on some of the many products people everywhere are wearing, the article said also that "needlepoint is shaking off its granny stigma. Designers at Valentino, Dolce & Gabbana and Gucci have paraded pieces embellished with embroidery down the runways and through the pages of *Vogue*." Moreover, NBC's "Today Show" also said that embroidery is one of four "must wear" trends emerging now.

All the recent buzz is probably is not news to the many businesses that have been promoting their brands with stitched promotional products for ages. Wearables from the classic baseball cap or beanie to the fleece vest, a must-have for anyone involved in the ever-growing tech sector, continue to be in constant demand.

Better yet, many other techniques work with embroidery. Whether your customer wants the metallic look, in gold or silver or just something more understated like a red, blue or green we can assist you in creating a production-ready design that will sew well and achieve marketing objectives. Customers can opt for elevated embroidery — designs pairing embroidery with rhinestones, laser applique and other decorations — for a sharp but simple three-dimensional finish, enabling their logos to stand out on wearables of any kind.

As a firm that has worked with hundreds of major suppliers, Idea Custom Solutions knows that embroidered promotional products are a big business. We are also a proud embroidery digitizing partner to many smaller firms and entrepreneurs who serve other SMBs.

Our customers require high-quality and value. We deliver consistently across thousands of orders every day by putting to work **smart processes and impressive technology**.

CLIENTS ARE RAVING

"Great service!"

On a typical day, he tries to explore new information and tactics. He always looks for opportunities to learn and develop both personally and professionally.

Previously, Shoaib was a shy person. So he is especially proud of the confidence he has gained and his improved communication skills since he started working here. Overall, he would like to be known as a team player who is flexible to support the company and its processes.

About Idea Custom Solutions, he says: "This is a very good organization. It is a platform to achieve success and take on different roles. All the managers are helpful and guide us."

Outside of the office, he tells us: "My favorite activity is going out with friends to see movies and eat." He also enjoys listening to music. Otherwise, he plays cricket and computer games. "I love to reach new levels in different games because it helps me to increase my concentration."

In the future Shoaib dreams of visiting Saudi Arabia.

TWEET THAT!

Creative ways to win business from [#staffing agencies](#): [#wearables](#), [#PromoProducts](#). [@ASICentral](#) <https://goo.gl/5QOqrr>

[Tweet That!](#)

For remote employees, "swag" or [#PromoProducts](#) build "equality of experience" out of the office <https://goo.gl/ZtCdh7>

[Tweet That!](#)

Bags of free goodies aren't just for [#Oscars](#). Apparel, spirits makers put "swag" in affluent hands. <https://goo.gl/tj3cqC>

[Tweet That!](#)

Philly [#techweek](#) attracts savvy innovators. Guests want [#PromoProducts](#) and t-shirts are a hit. <https://goo.gl/F1NYZ9>

[Tweet That!](#)

Idea Custom Solutions customer

“High quality, fast delivery.”

Idea Custom Solutions customer

DESIGN SHOWCASE

Embroidery Digitizing



Vector Artwork



Attendees look forward to 2017 [#TED](#) bag full of [#PromoProducts](#) like tech toys, socks and edibles.

<https://goo.gl/DnMfwg>

[Tweet That!](#)

How the bobblehead became [#baseball's](#) “secret weapon” [#PromoProduct](#) for attendance.

<https://goo.gl/x7xEB9>

[Tweet That!](#)

4 steps to create a lasting, meaningful [#brand](#) identity from [@Entrepreneur](#). [#TeachMeTuesdays](#)

<https://goo.gl/oJevon>

[Tweet That!](#)

[@Newsweek](#) says not every [#rebrand](#) works. “7 Dumb Ways” companies explained their new [#logo](#).

<https://goo.gl/dUm4Pu>

[Tweet That!](#)

Like the Minnesota Timberwolves, another [@NBA](#) team [#rebrands](#). The Indiana Pacers’ new [#logo](#) incorporates the state.

<https://goo.gl/2Zb7uN>

[Tweet That!](#)

In [#soccer](#), changing your [#brand](#) is cause for caution. A look at [@LFC's](#) [#logo](#) tweaks over time.

<https://goo.gl/V2zKQP>

[Tweet That!](#)

Progressive news outlet [@HuffPost](#) makes new with a new, more colorful [#logo](#); loses serif [#font](#).

<https://goo.gl/y1btb6>

[Tweet That!](#)

Bruce Wayne, Fight Club Soap, Jurassic Park: the best [#logos](#) of fictional companies in movies.

<https://goo.gl/85mwBG>

[Tweet That!](#)

Mashing up iconic [#logos](#) and name [#brands](#) for fun.

Champion + Chanel, Calvin Klein + Burger King.

<https://goo.gl/b0nUcS>

[Tweet That!](#)

[#Infographics](#) are a great way to inform and motivate customers. 5 reasons SMBs should use them.

<https://goo.gl/Hd6IsK>

[Tweet That!](#)

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