



BY HEATHER SUTTIE

What's in a Name?

A lot, since it's the basis of identity. While building your brand is vital, cleaving to it will make all the difference

YOUR NAME IS tied to the equity of your reputation. In other words, your name is a huge part of how your brand is recognized and valued by others. Some firms, like some people, use the same name all their lives. However, in the case of people, there was a time when women were expected to surrender their surnames and adopt their husbands'. It's probably fair to say that this doesn't happen as often as it used to. Still, some women feel that changing their surname – their brand – helps to mark a new phase in their lives and establish a new identity.

> TEXTBOOK CASE

Last year, I project-managed the advertising campaign relating to the brand transition of a Canadian law firm with a long and venerable tradition. As a result of a merger with the international legal giant Norton Rose Group in June 2011, the former Ogilvy Renault LLP adopted a new name, becoming Norton Rose OR LLP.

At the time, the “OR” part of the name was retained to pay homage to the provenance of Ogilvy Renault. However, in written form, OR appeared to ask a question: Norton Rose OR what? The question was answered in January 2012 when, with the addition of Macleod Dixon LLP, the firm changed its name again to Norton Rose Canada.

By this time, the introduction of the Norton Rose name and brand-building around it had been going great guns for more than 13 months. Chief Marketing Officer Lise Monette knew the impact on legal and business markets would be enormous and prepared accordingly.

“We announced the Ogilvy-Norton Rose merger the morning of November 15, 2010, with a full media campaign that included news releases, interview oppor-

tunities with key executives, and press kits that appeared on both firms' websites. The following day, we launched what to date is probably the largest and widest-reaching advertising campaign ever produced by a Canadian law firm, since it covered both Canada and the United States.

Norton Rose also launched the ad campaign in its international jurisdictions, while Deney's Reitz of South Africa, which like Ogilvy was also joining Norton Rose, did the same for its markets. For all involved, the scale was massive.”

Also massive was the shift from Ogilvy's award-winning website to that of Norton Rose. This was a significant undertaking. However, in the early hours of June 1, 2011, in what seemed like the flip of a switch, the Canadian firm – along with its name, brand and site – slipped into history and business began in a new context.

The scope of complexity and geography expanded further and an already brisk pace accelerated in October 2011, with the announcement that Macleod Dixon LLP would join Norton Rose Group. This is when the Canada- and US-focused ad campaign – which included prominent billboards at key airports, digital displays and signage at major arenas, elevator and digital media walls in select office towers, and print and online vehicles – was reloaded and retargeted to again span North America and, this time, cover key markets in South America and beyond.

Obviously, a major initiative on a scale such as this costs serious bucks. Monette confirms as much, but is shy about revealing the specific price tag: “Of course, the



cost has been steep and it will remain so for the next while. That said, we're going global only once, so it's worth doing right.” While the ad campaign continues to go full throttle, the firm is in overdrive, cranking out communications of all descriptions, hosting seminars, going strong with social media, and using every marketing tool in the shed to hammer home the new name and build the new brand.

> WHY TIME MATTERS

This is exactly as it should be, given that time is precious and the clock is ticking. In marketing theory, there is a general rule of thumb that, for a new name to be successful in the marketplace, the organization has two years to gain brand traction; otherwise you're spinning your wheels.

Right now, the firm's profile is high and it can be expected to stay that way for some time, especially since the firm is also known to be looking for an American addition. When that happens, the brand-building that has been established thus far will go a long way to securing that US firm, enabling a stronger competitive advantage in North and South American markets as well as worldwide. 📌

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