Let Them See Right Through You (Or at Least Your Logo)

By Kerri Donner, Marketing Communications Manager, Stanton Public Relations & Marketing

We are three months into 2016 and already it seems that rebranding is off to a fast start, with companies updating their looks left and right. In January, the BBC unveiled a new look one of its subsidiaries, BBC Three, as did the health and wellness website Greatist, the NHL's Florida Panthers, and Segway. Last month, the Metropolitan Museum of Art revealed a new logo, ZocDoc completely overhauled its identity and The Next Web announced they would be changing their look.

While the extent of the changes vary, all of these updates have had one thing in common — loud, mixed reviews from their audiences. The outcry is understandable since change is rarely accepted quietly. While I have my own opinions about what I've seen this year (along with the other 7.125 billion people on earth), it isn't the icons, fonts and colors that I find most interesting about the changes. What's caught my attention is that so many companies are sharing the story behind the design updates when launching their new logos.

Logos are often conceptual, sometimes even encrypted, and may even seem just plain weird at first. What consumers see is the end product — not the behind the scenes effort of marketing, design and strategy teams all work on. Without any knowledge of the "why", it's no wonder that people have strong opinions

about logos.

When an established brand chooses to redefine their look, it is not a small decision. Their audience is familiar with what they know and in today's world, everyone gets a say. Companies have to be ready for every single person to use that say and some have done that by giving people insight into the changes. So, whether or not someone agrees with Uber's new logo, they now have the opportunity to understand the reasoning behind it.

Admittedly, not every logo has a vast or complicated back-story; sometimes a design just seems right or looks good. Most of the time though, a logo design is the result of a long and detailed creative process aimed at finding a way to visually communicate a company's voice. The creative team has to decide how to show the story and voice of a brand in a single illustration.

Brands are in a very different situation than they were just five years ago. There is no such thing as a one-way conversation anymore and everyone is listening now in countless ways. Explaining the process behind a logo or design change is a way to take control of the conversation before it even occurs. They are in many ways even offering something that many consumers are not used to: transparency.

We have repeatedly seen organizations lose customers from failing to disclose certain information. A 2015 YouGov survey found nearly 70% of people do not trust major companies and it spans every industry. While revealing why a logo was changed or the process behind the design may not be the same as showing the inner workings of a business, in a time when customers are hesitant to trust corporations, opening a window — no matter how small — into how a company works can do wonders to earn it.

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