

You Can Call It Whatever You Like, It's Still The Same Thing

I love how some companies PR departments get creative(or at least claim to get creative) when they rename something but change little or nothing of the core product or business that they are renaming. It seems some companies and individuals are trying to reclaim some lost part of the market by hoping a quick name change will bring in a new rush of customers.

Sure it works, my cable company has changed it name about 3 times in five years. It holds about 80% of the market and everyone knows that its service is sub par. Your cable or internet can go off at random for days. Add to the fact that when this company decides to do maintenance work it basically shuts down the whole town of an internet connection for a few days. It has no multinetwork line backup, nothing, they are in fact a simple reseller of Quest Communications services.

You'd think with all this someone would come and knock the king off his hill. Well even though everyone in town knows that there service isn't the best, newcomers to the town simply do not know and are force feed advertisement after advertisement from this company. It also helps that they own one of the local broadcasting channels and stream free real estate listings to your tv, with the only commercial between house listings are ads for there services. When enough people get mad, it seems that the company just changes it name, and then relaunches itself and goes on an even bigger marketing campaign in the local market to newcomers. However, I have as of yet to see a change.

So why do companies just change the name and never upgrade there level of service or product. The are many reasons some simple some complex. For starters it is easy to do a corporate name change, this might not do anything but change your name on paper, but for a simple filing fee to your local secretary of state you can now call yourself something new. It's not quite like getting a new slate, more like pulling the cover over your potential new customers eyes. Some companies simply cannot upgrade there product/service b/c they are in fact dependent on someone or something else. If you are a reseller service and your core product has issues you can either choose to drop it or just keep relabeling it in order to keep up with the customer drop off rate by bringing in new customers.

In some cases companies rename something not because the product is bad but because they hope to increase consumer awareness by adding all sorts of marketing flare to drill into the minds of there hopeless victims(I mean, customers.) Take Wendy's for example, a few months back Wendy's started renaming itself in wake of slowing sales growth and a new consumer shift towards healthier eating habits. It tried to promote itself as a new better fast food place a valid start by any means, but what really stands out is it's slogan for this marketing twist, "It's not fast food, it's Wendy's".

That's kind of like saying a car is what people from New York drive and a vehicle is what someone from the south drives. A car/vehicle is the same thing, it's a ford, a Honda, a shiny compact/large piece of equipment that we use to get from point A to B. There is no difference here than Wendy's saying that they are not fast food. By fast food standards, "fast food" is defined as a drive thru restaurant one can order and receive food from in under 3 minutes. Nationally McDonald's holds the fastest time for this with an average wait time of under 1 minute, but how can Wendy's set itself apart.

Should we now assume that because they are no longer fast food they will take longer. No Wendy's knows there customers don't want to wait longer for there food to get to them. What about the salads and other "healthy" options on there menu. Wendy's has been selling salads for years, other fast food chains had added more healthy options than Wendy's as of late. So what has Wendy's basically done. They basically called there car an automobile, a republican a GOP member, it's all the same.

I like Wendy's, some of there food is quite tasty, but if you are going to rename yourself, do it with a little more passion. Don't put yourself in a class of other companies that simply pull the cover over the eyes of their customers. Consumers are smarter than that. The short sales spike to your bottom line, is not worth putting your corporate reputation at risk by simply putting a big shiny bow on the same old thing.

About the Author

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