

# Lessons from a rebrand

**T**ILLAMOOK CREAMERY — and the cheese, ice cream, yogurt, and butter it produces — is an Oregon Coast institution with international reach.

Its products are available around the globe. I'm passionate about Tillamook cheese. It's the only cheese I will buy, and their ice cream is a treat.

Recently, in celebration of their 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Tillamook Creamery updated their brand. Now calling themselves simply Tillamook, they introduced their new look earlier this year. Here are four lessons you can learn from what they did:

**1. Reinforce that nothing fundamental has changed.** When you update your brand, your customers may worry that something about the way you do business will change, too. Will your products and services be as good as they always were? Have your company values or outlook changed? A rebrand can be exciting, but also raises these questions.

Tillamook addresses this issue head-on when you visit their webpage about their rebrand. Greeted by the headline, “New Look, Same Tillamook,” they want you to know that though their look has changed, their commitment to great dairy products has not.<sup>1</sup>

**2. A rebrand is usually not a complete overhaul.** Think about national rebrands you've seen. Usually, companies keep some elements of their previous brand. Starbucks changed their logo in 2011, but their iconic mermaid remained.

UPS updated their look in 2014, but they own the colors brown and yellow and don't dare change them.

Tillamook kept their navy-blue color — adjusting the tint a bit — and their light orange as an accent color. They also updated the boat in their logo, which represents the Morning Star, a ship used by farmers in 1854 to carry their dairy products to market in Portland.

It's rare that a company throws out everything about its former brand. Generally, keeping some design elements, colors, and so on maintains a connection to the past even while a company moves forward.

**3. Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue (retro is in).** The new Tillamook brand look is decidedly more modern than their previous logo and design. The simple look of their cursive logo and the bold capital letters of their secondary font brought them firmly in step with current design trends.

It might surprise you, then, to learn that the cursive treatment of the word “Tillamook” is an updated version of their logo from the 1950s. They describe this as “creating a unique, hand-drawn wordmark that is more ownable, and distinct, yet with a nostalgic wink to our past.”<sup>2</sup>

Tillamook used an old element of their brand but made it fresh. Are their elements from your old logo or look that, if you updated them, would have a clean retro feel?

**4. Once you update, go all the way.** Within weeks of introducing their new



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look, Tillamook's packaging and products were updated in every store. Considering their breadth, this was remarkable. By contrast, too often companies make one of two mistakes: (1) they are not prepared for their rebrand, so they announce it before they have updated their packaging or marketing materials — such as business cards, letterhead, brochures, website, and so on — and (2) materials with the old logo and look are still being used long after the rebrand.

When you announce your new brand, make sure you are ready to roll it out. Have employees turn in their old shirts and hats for new ones. Replace product packaging, marketing materials, and signage so that, on the day the new brand goes live, you are moving forward exclusively with your new look.

The first three points above aren't hard and fast. Sometimes, a company does fully change direction (the opposite of #1) or throw out its old look completely (ignoring #2 and #3). Most companies that take such bold steps, though, are trying to overturn negative opinions about their existing brand. Assuming your customers' opinions of your brand are just fine, if you are thinking about updating your look, altering your logo, or even changing your company name, take a page from the Tillamook playbook.

Now, go eat some cheese and ice cream to celebrate! ☺

<sup>1</sup> New Look, Same Tillamook (2019, February 18). Retrieved April 29, 2019, from <https://www.tillamook.com/our-story/new-look.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



Tillamook Creamery's previous brand identity (left) was refreshed to a cursive wordmark (right).

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TILLAMOOK CREAMERY