CHAPTER 6

Beware of Branding Pitfalls

I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody.

Bill Cosby

Branding efforts can fail – there is no question about that. Every month, you read about at least one or two companies that lost a good sum of money on some kind of brand communication that just didn't reach or influence the customer.

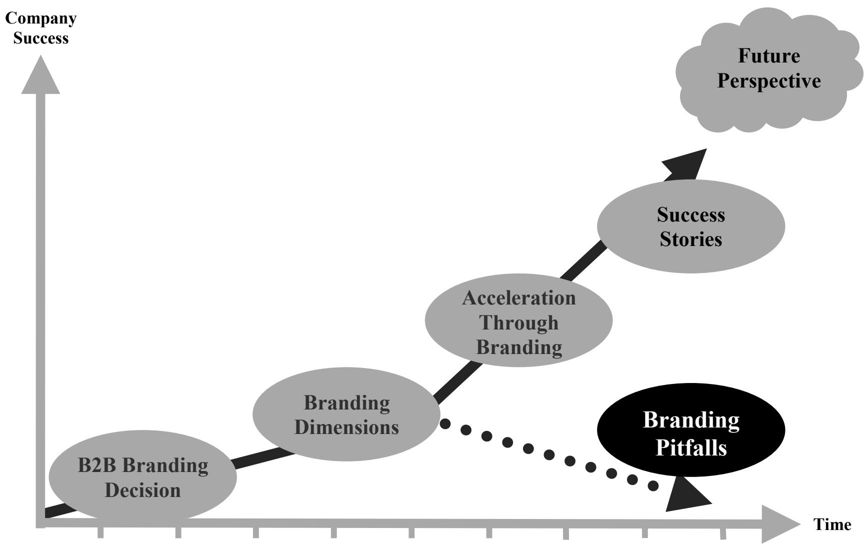

Fig. 65. Guiding principle branding pitfalls

The point is to learn from failed branding efforts of B2B companies that jumped into branding without considering the complete range of important aspects we addressed in previous chapters. In this chapter, we will address the problem of branding pitfalls that B2B organizations must be aware of in order to ensure that branding initiatives will reap results.

Good branding can make a **significant difference** to the **financial health** and **public awareness** of your company. David Aaker, the brand guru, contends that one common pitfall of brand strategists is to focus only on brand attributes and not the whole branding process. Aaker shows how to break out of the box by considering emotional and self-expressive benefits and by introducing the brand-as-person, brand-as-organization, and brand-as-symbol perspectives. The **twin concepts of brand identity** (the brand image that brand strategists aspire to create or maintain) and brand position (that part of the brand identity that is to be actively communicated) play a key role in managing the "out-of-the-box" brand.[1]

A second issue that Aaker emphasizes is to realize that individual **brands are part of a larger system** consisting of many intertwined and overlapping brands and subbrands. We manage a **"brand system" that requires** clarity and synergy, that needs to adapt to a changing environment, and that needs to be leveraged into new markets and products. With the advances of B2B branding knowledge we now know that there are more areas[2] where brand managers may make mistakes.

Here are the five major pitfalls.

Pitfall No. 1: A Brand Is Something You Own

One of the most common misconceptions of branding is that companies are convinced that they "own" the brand. Wrong! A brand is not always what a company wants it to be. It is a promise to your customers, the totality of perceptions about a product, service or business, the relationship customers have with it based on past experiences, present associations and future expectations. No matter what the business and its corporate executives would like their brand to be, brand reality is always defined by the customer's view.

That the reality of a brand only exists in the mind of the customers, we know from day-to-day business and from theories. Starting with the brand name, it is the customers' knowledge and the perceived meaning that determine the understanding of the brand promise. We know that customers have a local or national **pre-understanding** which can affect brand performance dramatically. For *Siemens Automation Systems*, the *SI* prefix to the various automation technologies was a suitable form of product brand classifications: *SI-Numeric* for Numeric Controls. *SI-Matic* for Programmable Controls and *SI-Rotec* for Robotic Controls. Unfortunately, *SI-Rotec* is pronounced in German like "Zero-tec", which was not an accurate description of the sophisticated electronic robot control and this resulted in confusing the customer's perception. Another example of predetermination of brand name is the international marketing approach of the US trade magazine for promoted giftware "Gift". The English name was used as the title around the world, and although in many countries the consumer had the desired associations with the term, the German language translates "gift" as poison, and the **resulting difference in the perception** of this word was enough to sabotage the planned promotion approach.

Kevin Roberts shows many similar examples in his recent publication.[3] The CBBE model supports this notion. According to Kevin Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity model (described in Chapter 4 of this book) brand knowledge creates in the customer's minds the **differential effect that builds brand equity**. Kevin Keller, the creator of this model, promises to build a Number 1 Rated Brand "in less than a decade" by applying the model.[4] If strength, favorability and uniqueness are recognizable, brand building is possible. With this awareness of the brand in the minds of the customers, multiple brand association will occur and the outcome is the enlargement of the brand equity. The company owns the brand equity but the customer owns the brand.

Pitfall No. 2: Brands Take Care of Themselves

Some companies surprisingly think that brand building has some kind of domino effect – once activated and successful it just keeps on going and going. Unfortunately brands do not take care of themselves. Surely, there can be some kind of domino effect; companies of famous consumer brands experience that their brands start to have a life of their own. This corresponds to the fact that a company doesn't own a brand (Pitfall No. 1) since it is defined by **customers' perceptions** and **associations** which never can be fully dictated by a company.

Your reputation is what you mean to the marketplace – a reputation for delivering on customer needs and wants in a way that is unique. If you have a good reputation why wouldn't you protect it? If not, competitors will undermine it or copy it with the result that new sales reps may not answer to it, prospects may not hear about it, customers may not continue to believe it. You are responsible for shaping perceptions of what you do, what you offer and how you stand behind your reputation. If a brand is an asset, then it must be treated like one – **receiving investment, management** and **maintenance.** A brand is affected by internal and external forces requiring reactions and changes. But this only occurs if the organization clearly understands the brand and how to manage it.[5]

Proactive brand management is the key to success: **Do not react, act**. This can happen **through brand differentiation or pure re-branding** – innovation through re-inventing the brand. With a long term perspective, the business brand can keep its freshness. With the help of digital brand communication, B2B brands are much easier to refresh than B2C brands. Due to the one-to-one relationship, brand messages can be transmitted to the customers more easily than in mass market approaches.

Declining brands could be identified through various means. Brand metrics like **Keyword Search (KWS)** and **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** are very helpful, in addition to press coverage and customer recognition. If you identify a declining situation in your company or brand portfolio, you'd better act.

The glass-ceramic brand *Ceran*® from *Schott* is an interesting example of a brand that was resting on its laurels. Although *Schott Ceran*® is the most important individual product brand in the *Schott* portfolio, the company somehow lost sight of its brand management. During the 80's the company promoted its brand heavily to appliance manufacturers, kitchen designers, retailers, as well as end consumers. In the late 80s *Schott* moved away from its former ingredient brand strategy for *Ceran*®, pushing their corporate brand *Schott* to the fore. Today, *Schott* is only promoting its product to end consumers when entering new markets.

Schott is well-known, respected, and successful in the industrial sector. For consumers in Germany and many other countries, it has become the generic term for glass stove tops. It may be a desired goal for any brand to become an industry standard but only if people still perceive the standard as brand and can relate to it as such. Unfortunately this is not the case for *Ceran* anymore. The reality is that only few people, especially in the United States, even know that *Ceran* is the brand name of the glass-ceramic manufacturer *Schott*. This is not surprising considering that the majority of end product manufacturers abstain from referring to the brand *Ceran*® in their own communications.

This should not imply that the product is not successful, because it is. Its success story already began more than three decades ago and the company has sold more than 50 million glass-ceramic cooking surfaces worldwide since then. This number clearly shows how *Schott Ceran* revolutionized cooking appliances with its invention. In Europe, more than half of all new electric cooking appliances are now equipped with *Ceran*® cook top panels, regardless of the energy sources available. In 2004 *Schott* further optimized its material composition which, along with a modified production process has improved the heat transmission of the glass-ceramic surfaces for the latest generation of *Ceran Suprema*®. The successful result reduced boil-times by up to 16% and therefore reduced energy consumption at the same time.[6]

And here we are back at the problem – do consumers/buyers of cooking appliances for whom this is certainly interesting and relevant know this too? Does anybody care to inform them about the obvious advantages of *Ceran*® cooking panels? The term and product has become so generic that it is seen as self-explanatory although most consumers do not know *Ceran*.

Searching the web on the terms "glass-ceramic" and *Ceran,* you will stumble across many forums handling questions like "What pans for *Ceran* black glass electric cooktop?", "Does it scratch easily?"

Of course you could argue that since all major manufacturers of cooking appliances already have stoves with glass-ceramic panels, it is irrelvant that the brand has lost its power to differentiate and add value. But isn't this also the case with other companies like *Intel*? Today, almost every PC producer in the world is offering products with *Intel Inside* – did this impair their branding success? Obviously it didn't. Therefore we are also recommending a resumption of a holistic brand strategy for *Schott Ceran*®.

Pitfall No. 3: Brand Awareness vs. Brand Relevance

Many businesses make the mistake of vastly overrating the importance of brand awareness. Of course, if customers and stakeholders don't know you or your brand you are completely out of the picture, but to know you does not equal to buy from you. Plastering the streets with your corporate logo does **surely raise brand awareness** but much more is needed to sell your products or services. A brand also has to convey a meaningful and **relevant brand message** effectively targeted to reach customers and stakeholders.

In 2001, *E.ON*, a German utility company (after merging with *VEBA* and *VIAG*) chose to jump on the branding wagon to promote its commodity, electrical power. Millions of Euros were invested in broad-coverage advertising campaigns to develop their brands. Just four months after launching the "Mix it, baby" campaign developed with Arnold Schwarzenegger by the *E.ON* group, the *E.ON* brand achieved an aided recall of an amazing 93% and an unaided advertising recall of 66%. But did the estimated advertising expenditure of EUR 22.5 million pay off? Well, the German press reported in 2002 that the campaign was able to persuade only 1,100 customers to switch to *E.ON* – translating into canvassing costs of an incredible EUR 20,500 per customer. With the average annual turnover of around EUR 600 per customer, it is quite doubtful that this investment will ever pay off over the customer life cycle.[7]

Consider another company, *BASF*. Their slogan "We don't make a lot of the products you buy. We make a lot of the products you buy better". This is the corporate statement that has made the *BASF* corporate advertising campaign the most recognized of any corporate campaign from the North American chemical industry. *BASF* describes itself as "the world's leading chemical company". It is very successful and highly regarded around the world. Based in Europe, they have large operations in North America. *BASF* reported 2005 sales of €42.7 billion (up 14 percent from last year) and income from operations (EBIT) before special items of more than €6.1 billion (up 17 percent). The company's 83,000 employees manufacture thousands of products globally. The fact is they don't make many finished products – virtually all of the 6,000-plus products that they manufacture are ingredients that enhance the finished products consumers buy daily.[8]

It's unusual for a chemical company to run a branding campaign. In fact, Ian G. Heller, the director of branding valuation at Real Results Marketing agencies, accuses North American chemical companies of "shockingly low" levels of expenditures on branding – often less than 0.5 % of sales.[9] *BASF*, as the exception, is proud of its ad campaign along with the numerous benefits it has received from the increased level of awareness about *BASF*. As they point out, in one survey, "Nearly 70 percent of respondents recognized the slogan and 48 percent of all respondents both recognized it and correctly attributed it to *BASF* as part of a measure known as true awareness." The company goes on to say that, "By way of comparison, *BASF's* top three competitors in the U.S. received between 1 percent and 2 percent true slogan awareness."[10]

We don't make the computer screen. We make it sharper.
Paliocolor® liquid crystals from BASF substantially improve the viewing angle and contrast for flat screens. In contrast to other highly developed liquid crystals on the market, Paliocolor can be applied in coat only micrometers thick and polymerized into a hard film that provides high contrast and sharp images at wide angles.

We don't make the sandboard. We make it lighter.
BASF manufactures Terluran® acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS) plastics that are often used as the core of sandboards, snowboards and other sporting goods. Plastic materials are well-known for providing lightweight performance in comparison to other materials.

We don't make the dress. We make it brighter.
BASF manufactures Ultraphor® optical brighteners for finishers of polyester/cellulosic blend fabrics. In addition, the company manufactures dispersion dyes such as Bafixan® that are well-suited to polyester, and are used in microfiber and sports clothing.

We don't make the motorcycle. We make it quicker.
BASF manufactures Ultramid® polyamide nylon, which is replacing metal in more and more automotive part applications. Because Ultramid provides high mechanical strength, rigidity and thermal stability, it performs as well as metals and is lighter in weight. Nylon's light weight helps make vehicles more fuel efficient and quicker. In addition, BASF manufactures polyisobutyleneamine (PIBA) which is a gasoline additive that provides superior intake valve detergency while controlling combustion chamber deposits, making for a cleaner burning, better performing engine.

Fig. 66. *BASF* corporate campaign 2006[11]

Brand awareness is the first layer of the Brand Building Pyramid in Kevin Keller's CBBE Model but it is only a prerequisite for brand relevance. [12] Brand relevance is directly triggered by the brand functions as described in Chapter 2. In the B2B environment, risk reduction, increased information efficiency, and value added through image benefit creation drives the brand functions directly. These factors are widened by the increased importance of the proliferation of similar products and services, increasing complexity, and incredible price pressures. As a result, if you are only looking at brand awareness, the company is missing out on the value driving aspects.

The question is: does this kind of marketing spending create brand relevance? Consumers are not choosing finished goods based on the raw materials used. The audacity and brilliance of *BASF's* advertising campaign is that they are paying to build awareness among a group of people who are not actually their customers. Nevertheless, done right, the campaign hits its mark and achieves relevant awareness in the right target group. Done wrong, it would be like Ferrari running an expensive campaign on Nickelodeon and then claiming success because awareness of their expensive sports cars has increased among 5-year olds. Awareness is not good for its own sake; it must be targeted to the right audience.[13]

In today's environment, unless a brand can maintain its relevance as categories emerge, change, and fade, narrow application preference may not be sufficient. Walter Seufert *BASF* President Europe is very convinced that the campaign was successful: "There are three main reasons, first the competition was real upset, second customers praised it, and third many new customers signed up."

Pitfall No. 4: Don't Wear Blinders

Many businesses mistakenly base their branding strategies solely around their **internal image of their brands**. The problem with this approach is that the internal view can often be quite different from the customer's. Management is quite often too close to a company to remain objective about the role it can realistically play in the marketplace. Arrogance, wishful thinking and office politics often further distort realities. This lack of objectivity needs to be compensated by effective customer analysis. By gaining customer input, they will better determine their current brand image, and also discover what they need to do to make it more relevant.[14]

ITT Industries, Inc. a global engineering and manufacturing company with leading positions in the markets of Fluid Technology Motion and Flow Control, is a great example of a company that successfully revealed and removed its "blinders". One division of the company is the world's premier supplier of pumps, systems and services to move, control and treat water and other fluids. It is moreover a major supplier of sophisticated military defense systems, and provides advanced technical and operational services to a broad range of government agencies. ITT Industries also produces industrial components for a number of other markets, including transportation, construction and aerospace. In 1995, ITT Industries gained independence from ITT Corporation and organized itself around three distinct divisions – Automotive, Defense & Electronics and Fluid Technology.[15] Despite the fact that its market offerings are targeted at relatively small groups of prospects, the company launched a million dollar branding campaign targeted at the general public in 1998. The reason was an identity problem that might not have been effectively uncovered if the company had only taken an internal perspective.

In 1997 the company conducted a study in the financial community to measure awareness of the then two year old company. It revealed both good and bad news. Positive was that people immediately recognized the "ITT" name and associated it with high-quality products. Unfortunately, when it came to ITT Industries, they were unclear on what ITT Industries is, and what it wanted to be. Many – particularly those in the investment community – still associated the ITT brand not only with its engineered products, but with financial services and resort hotels. Two out of every three respondents listed hotels, casinos or telephone equipment as its primary businesses.

The confusion partly stemmed from a mix-up with its former parent company ITT Corporation that was making front-page news in its battle to stave off a hostile take over by Hilton at that time. The research clearly underlined the need for a corporate brand strategy and campaign that would help to clarify ITT Industrial's brand essence by communicating a clear message to its stakeholders. The corporation realized that it needed to set ITT Industries apart from all other ITT's in the minds of investors, prospective customers and employees, and bring together its many strong businesses and brands under one umbrella.[16]

In 1998, the company launched a campaign targeted at the general public. The campaign presented the new corporate logo and the "Engineered for life" tagline. It comprised television and print advertisements. The print ads appeared in leading business publications including The *Wall Street Journal*, The New York Times, Barron's, The Economist, The Financial Times, Forbes, Fortune, Business Week and a number of other publications.[17]

If a company moves away from their internal view, building a strong brand involves a series of logical steps: "establishing the proper brand identity; creating the appropriate brand meaning; eliciting the right brand responses, and forging appropriate brand relationships with customers."[18]

No one knows the branding game better than brand extension guru Scott Bedbury – master of creating living-brands. In his seven years at *Nike*, Scott conceived and directed the worldwide 'Just Do It' branding campaign, increasing *Nike* revenue from US$750 million to US$5 billion by the time he left *Nike* in 1994. He then joined *Starbucks* in 1995, as chief marketing officer, where he was responsible for growing the US$700 million Seattle-based company into a global brand. There he championed the serving of *Starbucks* on all United Airline flights, engaged in a joint venture with *PepsiCo* to market *Starbucks* "Frappuccino" in supermarkets and joined with *Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream* to introduce six flavors of *Starbucks Ice Cream*. *Starbucks* expanded in the three years of his employment from 390 stores to 1,600 stores worldwide. Nowadays they boast 4,435 stores on three continents as well as branded coffee paraphernalia, music, and candy.[19] Bedbury helped *Nike* and *Starbucks* look outside for market opportunities rather than inside at a mirror.

We would put Eric Kim, the new Chief Marketing Officer of *Intel*, in the same club as Bedbury. Together with Chief Executive Paul Otellini, he saw the changes in *Intel*'s marketplace and the need to change its strategy. On January 3, 2006, the world's biggest chipmaker scrapped its 37-year-old *Intel Inside* logo as part of a major rebranding that will emphasize its shift away from its core PC business into consumer products. The original *Intel Corp.* logo featuring a lowered "e" will be replaced with one showing an oval swirl surrounding the company's name. The phrase "Leap ahead" will supplant *Intel Inside*, which launched the *Silicon Valley* giant into public awareness and helped it build the world's No. 5 brand, worth an estimated US$36 billion, according to Interbrand 2005 scoreboard.[20]

The company said that although the *Intel Inside* tagline will disappear, it will retain a marketing program with that name in which *Intel* helps PC makers advertise products that use its chips. *Intel* is counting on the consumer appetite for digital media and networking to drive business as the PC market slows and as rival Advanced *Micro Devices Inc.* makes inroads into the markets for laptop and server computers.[21]

The brand overhaul also puts a new face on an internal shift accelerated since the new CEO Otellini took charge of the company in May 2005. The changes take the focus off individual chips and puts it on "platforms" that the company hopes will spur the integration of *Intel*-based computers with digital media and networks in homes, businesses and schools. This takes the brand strategy and aligns it with the business strategy that has been underway at *Intel* for several years. The new campaign also plays down *Intel's* venerable *Pentium* brand while emphasizing its *Centrino* line of laptop chips and a new effort called "Viiv" that aims to integrate PCs into home entertainment such as by recording TV shows and sending them to other devices. *Intel* also for the first time revealed that its new chip for laptop computers will be marketed as Core. That processor, to be a key part of Viiv, is to debut early next year and will be a major product launch as *Intel* seeks to regain ground in the mobile market against *AMD*.

The Santa Clara, California-based company is rolling out the re-branding just weeks after it elevated Eric Kim to the role of Chief Marketing Officer. *Intel* hired Kim away last year from *Samsung Electronics*, where he was credited with helping to forge a savvy consumer brand to take on industry stalwarts such as Japan's *Sony Corp.*

This example shows that *Intel* didn't wear blinders. Instead, they saw the threat from their major rival *AMD* and the newcomer Samsung, and moved aggressively ahead and changed the ingredient brand *Intel Inside* to a master brand with a new logo and the tagline "Leap Ahead". No doubt, we will probably see more changes from that company.[22]

Pitfall No. 5: Don't Let Outsiders Do Your Job

Earlier in this book we recommended enlisting the assistance of professional brand agencies in order to assure a certain degree of objectivity. But that doesn't mean that you should let them do this job alone! A good brand agency can assist in developing a **holistic brand approach** but their foremost intention is to make money. They are not the ones to tell you who you are, and what your company is about. Many businesses fail to acknowledge that they need to be actively involved in the whole process and that it is not enough to hire a branding agency.

A strong and comprehensive brand approach requires a high level of personal attention and commitment from the CEO and CMO and the other senior management if you want to be successful. The branding approach needs to be **elevated into the board rooms**. Corporate branding addresses additional issues concerning all stakeholders (customers, shareholders, media, competitors, governments and many others).[23]

And if you are seeking help, who should you approach, an **ad agency or a consultant company?** There was a time when advertising was indisputably acknowledged to be the highest form of marketing – indeed, for many brand owners, advertising and branding were synonymous. But today, the situation has changed. As Niall Fitzgerald, CEO of *Unilever*, famously said a few years ago: "There is an alarming discrepancy between what our brands are going to need and what agencies are good at."[24]

The concept of "branding" has moved far beyond communicating product differences and building "image". This means that advertising agencies need to shift from creating advertising to providing high-end strategic advice about not only marketing, but the business as a whole. However, personal experience and studies suggest that brand owners do not yet believe that agencies are delivering at that higher level; good news for consultancies providing brand strategy advice. The big networks – *Omnicom, WPP, Interpublic* – all have their feet firmly in both camps, owning both world-renowned advertising agency groups, as well as international brand consultancies.

We suggest a combined approach: strong internal resources and commitment, advice from brand consultants or knowledgeable individuals, like professors, and the use of excellent advertisement specialists. In 1992, *Andersen Consulting* spent approximately US$10 million globally on advertising. ***Accenture*** **did their successful re-branding that way**.

Accenture is the new name for *Andersen Consulting*, which broke away from *Arthur Andersen* in 2000,[25] after a longstanding feud. The change to *Accenture* was the fastest, most expensive re-branding effort in history as everything was changed to fit the new logo in a matter of days.[26] The name change follows an independent arbitrator's August 2000 ruling in favor of *Andersen Consulting* in its arbitration with *Andersen Worldwide* and *Arthur Andersen*. Under the terms of the ruling, *Andersen Consulting* was excused from any further obligations to *Andersen Worldwide* and *Arthur Andersen* and given until December 31, 2000 to adopt a new name with no explicit or implicit reference to *Andersen*. It was then that *Arthur Andersen* got into so much legal

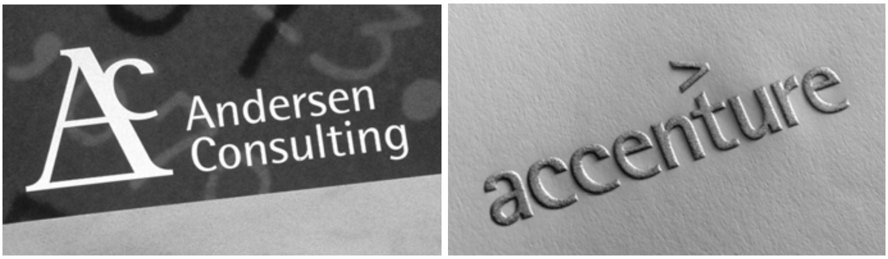

Fig. 67. *Andersen Consulting* and *Accenture* logos

trouble for allowing *Enron* to cook their books and destroying *Enron's* documents as *Enron* collapsed. Today *Arthur Anderson* is history, but *Accenture* was not affected at all. At the end of 2005 *Accenture* had more than 126,000 (including more than 4,100 senior executives) based in more than 110 offices in 48 countries delivering a wide range of consulting, technology and outsourcing services, with revenues of US$15.55 billion for fiscal 2005 (12 mos. ending Aug. 31, 2005).

Under the leadership of former Chairman and CEO Joe W. Forehan *Accenture* had dedicated its brightest management talents to steer that re-branding exercise: Teresa Poggenpohl; Partner and Director-Global Brand, Advertising, and Research, Jim Murphy Global Managing Director – Marketing & Communications. The task was re-branding, re-positioning and re-structuring. The old *Andersen Consulting* already had set a new standard for marketing a professional services company. *Andersen Consulting* is widely credited as being the first professional services firm to advertise aggressively. As Jim Murphy, Global Managing Director of Marketing & Communications said, "In 1989, *Andersen Consulting* not only created a new management and technology organization, but also created with the help of our communications agency Young & Rubicam, a new advertising category for professional services."

The partners understood marketing in a strategic sense and had the courage to create the brand and invest in it at a time when branding was not a priority for professional services firms. This was a breakthrough approach for transforming the company. The first step was the re-branding. To create the new brand identity they used an inside-out, outside-in approach. Top management used the Business-to-Employee (B2E) Portal to communicate the re-naming task. Out of the 65,000 professionals, 47 teams were formed and 2,700 suggestions were created through a "brand-storming" exercise. "*Accenture* was the only name in our final round of selection that was developed by an employee," Poggenpohl said. "It's a fanciful name that means nothing around the world."

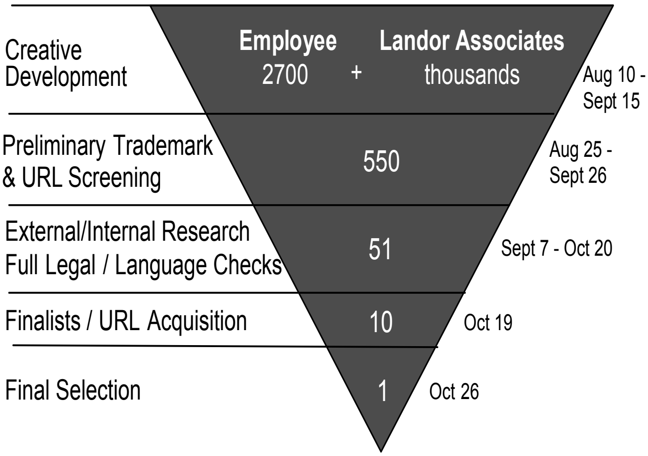

Fig. 68. Naming development in 2000 from *Anderson Consulting* to *Accenture*

With the help of *Landor Associates*, not only was the new brand name was selected but also a distinctive logo created. In addition, intensive market research was conducted to acquire possible client judgments and reaction.

Accenture did much more than simply change its name. Landor Associates was engaged to help reposition the firm in the marketplace to better reflect its new vision and strategy to become a market maker, architect and builder of the new economy by executing a new business strategy and refocusing its capabilities. Moving away from the IT-driven company image to business and technology consulting, *Accenture* aspires to become one of the world's leading companies, bringing innovations to improve the way the world works and lives. The other big task was the integration of 6 WPP agencies in 147 days during the whole exercise:

Landor	Brand strategy, naming consultancy, word mark, visual identity system
Y&R Advertising	Brand strategy, advertising, global launch
Burson-Marsteller	Brand strategy, global launch
Wunderman	Marketing communications, global launch
Luminant	Marketing communications
The Media Edge	Media buying

After a teaser campaign from August to the end of December, the new name was promoted aggressively, accompanied by a major marketing push. All clients and many industry experts were informed through promotion packages. More than US$175 million were spent for a huge marketing push with the help of an advertising campaign, using print and television advertisements. In addition, highly visible events were sponsored such as World Golf Championship, *BMW/Williams Formula 1* and the World Economic Forum in Davos 2001. The biggest single expenditure was the four TV spots during the US 2001 *Super Bowl*. The results were overwhelming. Three months post-launch, the unprompted awareness amongst target audiences reached 29% – eclipsing nearly every competitor. *Accenture* was recognized as a leader in its field in less than 18 months, and the new brand achieves industry recognition such as:

- European Effie
- ACE Award for the launch kit
- WPP Partnership Program Award
- *Accenture's* Jim Murphy voted *PR Man of the Year, Marketer of the Year* by B2B magazine

Besides the task of re-branding and repositioning *Accenture*, a restructuring of the organization was initiated. The first step was the change of the ownership structure from a partnership to a limited company. *Accenture* changed three months later to a public traded company. It had its initial public offering (IPO) at the New York stock exchange in June 2001.

Following a decade of prosperity and growth, *Accenture* staked a new direction and forged a new identity at the turn of the 21st century. After successful arbitration against *Andersen*, *Accenture* was able to recast itself under a new name, coinciding with the launch of a new positioning. The re-branding and repositioning of *Accenture* was unprecedented in scope and timeframe – the largest re-branding initiative ever undertaken by a professional services firm, being successfully implemented across 47 countries in just 147 days. *Accenture* launched this re-branding and repositioning to its global audience with a multi-phase global marketing campaign that began before the official changeover occurred on January 1, 2001. The challenge was daunting, but the objectives clear: To reposition the company, transfer brand equity to *Accenture*, raise awareness of *Accenture* globally and to eliminate residual confusion with *Arthur Andersen*. Changes in the business climate in 2001 prompted a refinement to their positioning, one that delineated *Accenture's* ability to help companies capitalize on their marketplace opportunities by bringing their ideas to life.

Summary

Pitfalls in B2B branding are unlikely to be anticipated by newcomers to the branding effort. Beware of the following pitfalls in order to ensure that branding initiatives will reap results.

- One of the most common misconceptions of branding is **that companies believe that they "own" the brand**. No matter what the business and its corporate executives would like their brand to be, brand reality is always defined by the customer's view.
- Some companies think that **brands take care of themselves**. If companies let their brand asset deteriorate, the overall company performance can suffer. We recommend proactive brand management through brand differentiation or pure re-branding.

- A company may not have their priorities set if it is **overrating the importance of brand awareness** instead of focusing on brand relevance. Managing touchpoints and messages effectively and targeting the right customers and stakeholders can assure efficient use of funds and management time.
- Many businesses mistakenly base their branding strategies solely around the **internal image of their brand**. This type of wishful thinking may lead to lack of objectivity. By gaining customer input, it can determine the current brand image, and also discover what is needed to do to make the brand more relevant.
- **Advertising agencies and consultants** may do their job by assisting in developing a holistic brand approach but the company should determine its own brand identity.

The essence is to learn from failed branding efforts of B2B companies that jumped into branding without considering the **whole range of brand creation and steering.**

Notes

1 D.A. Aaker, *Building Strong Brands*, (New York: The Free Press, 1996).

2 Dan Morrison, "The Six Biggest Pitfalls in B-to-B Branding," *Business2Busi-ness Marketer* (July/August, 2001).

3 Kevin Roberts from *Saatchi & Saatchi* supports in his outstanding publication *Lovemarks-the future beyond brands* that brands only exist in the customer's mind. He even goes one step further and states that if brands are in the heads of people they could even become Lovemarks. He is mainly talking about consumer brands that are so beloved that they go beyond just being known brands. It is interesting to note that some B2B brands such as *FedEx, IBM, Siemens, Segway*, or *Zwilling* made it on to his Lovemarks list.

4 Paul Rittenberg, "Building a #1 Rated Brand in Less than a Decade," *The Advertiser* (October 2002).

5 Dan Morrison, "The Six Biggest Pitfalls in B-to-B Branding," *Business2Business Marketer* (July/August, 2001).

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