THE TICKER

THE NAME GAME

1950 1956 1960 1970

1997 2006 2019

Evolution of Dunkin' Donuts' branding

IMAGE COURTESY OF DUNKIN' BRANDS GROUP, INC.

What is in a name? A number of global companies are finding out as they rebrand under a new or abbreviated moniker. In September, Dunkin' Donuts CEO David Hoffmann announced that the 69-year-old U.S. chain would streamline its name to Dunkin', citing an increased focus on drinks and the desire to simplify the company's branding. And in October, Lendix founder and CEO Olivier Goy announced that the French finance startup would rebrand as October—yes, the month. Mr. Goy believes the new name will be easier to understand and remember in different languages and allow for a broader scope of services beyond just lending.

The potential benefits are clear. But companies face plenty of risk when changing names.

To start, the process can be expensive. "There is a whole range of costs," Timothy Calkins, a professor of marketing at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, told Vox. "When you rebrand Dunkin' Donuts you now need new signage, cups, napkins, uniforms. All of the different brand touch points have to change, and all of that is going to require meaningful cash. Creating, building and manufacturing a sign for a Dunkin' location isn't inexpensive."

The transition period can also be awkward and reflect poorly on both the new and old brands. "You have this phase when both logos are floating around," Mr. Calkins said. "That will look a little bit haphazard and a little half-baked from a consumer perspective."

But perhaps the greatest risk is the potential of alienating—or downright confusing—the current customer base and new target market. Radio Shack learned this the hard way after renaming itself "The Shack." Mr. Calkins sees similar trouble ahead for health-and-wellness company Weight Watchers, which in September slimmed itself down to WW. "What does that even mean?" he wondered. "Is it 'WWW,' like a website?"

All of which means that executives need to carefully weigh the potential risks and benefits when considering a makeover. As imperfect as it may be, a brand by any other name may not smell as sweet to customers.

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>
> **—Timothy Calkins,** Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management

FOR GEN Z, FAILURE IS AN OPTION

"Fail fast" has become a business mantra in the age of agility, and Generation Z appears to be on board. As its oldest members turn 24 this year, the generation is already starting to make a splash in the workforce by distinguishing itself from preceding generations.

In a 2018 EY global survey of 1,400 Gen Z members, 80 percent of respondents said that "embracing failure on a project will help them to be more innovative." Seventeen percent believe that it will make them more comfortable taking on new risks in the future. The contrast with earlier research on millennials is notable. One Babson University study from 2015 found that 41 percent of millennials cited "fear of failure" as the No. 1 roadblock to starting their own business.

So what does Gen Z's failure-friendly approach to work mean for its supervisors? To get the most out of members of this cohort, give them the space to be unsuccessful safely. "Organizations should create an environment that allows them to bring their ideas forward, fail fast and then learn from that failure," EY's Natasha Stough said in a press release.

With 97 percent of Gen Z members open to ongoing feedback, they are bound to learn—and innovate—a lot in their first few years on the job.